



**Meet the Head Master,  
Dr Gary Savage**

The Elizabethan Club asked Dr Savage questions on behalf of Old Westminsters at a virtual event this year.

**Interview with Artin  
Basirov**

Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins in conversation with the Chairman of the Elizabethan Club 2015-2020.

**From the Archives: Black  
Lives Matter**

Elizabeth Wells reflects upon Westminster School's history following the removal of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol.

# The Elizabethan Newsletter

2020/21



## Voce: celebrating diversity at Westminster

Pupils' articles, short stories,  
poetry and art





---

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any shape or form by any means electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of Westminster School.

The views and opinions expressed by writers within The Elizabethan Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of Westminster School. No responsibility is assumed by the publisher for any injury and/or damage to persons or property as a matter of products liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use or operation of any methods, products, instructions or ideas contained in the material herein.

# Contents

- 04 From The Editor
- 04 From The Chairman
- 05 Welcome from the Head Master, Dr Gary Savage
- 07 Development Report
- 08 OWConnect
- 10 Interview with new Head Master, Dr Gary Savage
- 18 Voce: Our Pupil-led Magazine Excerpts
- 22 News from the School and OWW Community
- 31 The Old Westminster's Lodge
- 32 Interview with Artin Basirov, Chairman of the Elizabethan Club 2015-2020
- 34 Alumni in Print
- 38 From the Archives
- 42 In Memoriam

*If you are receiving a hard copy of this Newsletter, it is because you missed the deadline to give us your e-communications consent. In an effort to become more environmentally conscious, we are sending the majority of Newsletters via email.*

*Please update your preferences here, to make sure you keep receiving future Newsletters, and all relevant OW communications.*

**Update your preferences here!**

[www.oldwestminster.org.uk/stay-connected](http://www.oldwestminster.org.uk/stay-connected)

## **The Westminster School Development Office**

Jane Griffiths

*Director of Development*

Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins

*Alumni Relations and Engagement Manager*

Kat Stobbs

*Development and Community Giving Manager*

Luke Meadows

*Database and Gift Administration Manager*

Abi Phillips

*Development Officer*

**[alumni@westminster.org.uk](mailto:alumni@westminster.org.uk)**

+44 (0)20 7963 1113

## **The Elizabethan Newsletter**

Editor: Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins

Assistant Editor: Abi Phillips

Design: Haime & Butler

Print: Lavenham Press

Front cover artwork by Isabella

Westminster School is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 312728).

Information is correct at time of print.

## **Elizabethan Club Committee**

Jonathan Carey, President (GG, 1964-69)

Jessica Chichester, Chair (GG, 2000-02)

Charles Low, Treasurer (QS, 1967-72)

David Roy, Vice-President (AHH, 1955-61)

Tim Woods, Vice-President (GG, 1969-74)

Nick Brown, Vice-President (RR, 1968-73)

Matthew Webb, Sports Rep (BB, 1999-04)

Artin Basirov (GG, 1989-94)

Gavin Griffiths (WW, 1967-72)

Henry Johnson King (LL, 2007-12)

Noel Watson-Doig (RR, 1994-96)

Arnav Kapoor (MM, 2010-15)

Poppy Maxwell (PP, 2008-10)

Emma-Jane Gordon (LL, 2012-14)

Oliva D'Silva (GG, 2008-10)

James Kershen (WW, 1981-86)

Paul Dunn (AHH, 1991-93)



## From The Editor

It has been a challenging year for all of us and this edition of the Newsletter will look very different due to the nature of the Club's activities in the past 12 months. There have been no House Dinners, Sports Society updates or wider community events and therefore far less to report on... or so we thought! When the call for news from OWW went out earlier this year, we were thrilled to hear about what members have done in the past 12 months to keep themselves occupied – skip to page 24 to read about what some of your fellow OWW have been up to in lockdown! Whilst the Development Office continues to work from home, collating this Newsletter has been a welcome reminder that despite the restrictions that COVID-19 has necessitated, this community continues to thrive. At the time of writing, the UK is still under Government restrictions and the School and Club are both strictly following all guidance regarding events and gatherings. Please do keep an eye on your inbox for news on upcoming events.

A big thank you to the Committee and to all those OWW who contributed to this Newsletter and beyond.

As ever, if you have any suggestions for new Newsletter content, or any comments on this edition, please do get in touch.

With warmest wishes,

**Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins**

Alumni Relations and Engagement Manager  
rhiannon.jones@westminster.org.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7963 1113

*The Elizabethan Club are always looking to re-connect to any OW or former staff who did not receive a copy of this newsletter. If you know of anyone who did not receive a copy who would like to, please ask them to email [alumni@westminster.org.uk](mailto:alumni@westminster.org.uk)*



## From The Chairman

Dear Old Westminster,

Welcome to the 2020/21 edition of the Elizabethan Newsletter and my first year as Chair of the Elizabethan Club. I took over formally from my predecessor, Artin Basirov, in November, but I have been a member on the Committee for over 10 years, and I am looking forward to my time as Chair. I hope to continue his work of engaging with as many OWW from all eras, interests and careers, by having a range of events throughout the year.

Unfortunately, due to the lockdown restrictions, our planned events for 2020/21 had to be put on hold. However, the Club did make the transition to online events and has enjoyed a number successful lectures and quiz nights. Although not the same as face-to-face events, they have had the advantage of being open to OWW from all over the world so it has been great to see some new faces at these events. The range of speakers has been fascinating, from historians to psychologists to authors.

Thank you to all the OWW who took part in the survey and, following on from this, the Committee are looking into some changes to the Elizabethan Club on how we communicate with the Old Westminster community; the branding of the Club so it is clear that it is a separate entity and what we represent; the events and also on diversity and inclusion. I want to ensure that the Elizabethan Club is inclusive and representative of all OWW at every level of engagement. So please watch this space.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Artin for all his hard work and commitment he has put into the Elizabethan Club during his tenure and I am happy to say that he is staying on as a Committee member. I would also like to welcome the new Head Master, Dr Gary Savage, who has already been incredibly helpful and supportive of the Club, including letting himself be interviewed by Gavin Griffiths at our online 'Meet the Head Master' event. I very much look forward to working with him more in the years to come.

This has not been an easy year for anyone, and I know that so many of us are looking forward to things going back to normal (or a new version of normal). No one could have imagined how much of an impact the pandemic would have on the world and our everyday lives. The Elizabethan Club Committee is looking forward to welcoming back members of our OWW community for events and gatherings, safely, as soon as we are able.

My wholehearted thanks go to the Committee, and to the Development Office, for their continued dedication and determination.

For the time being, keep safe and well.

**Jessica Chichester (GG, 2000-02)**





---

## Welcome from the Head Master

**Dr Gary Savage**

Dear Elizabethan Club members,

I write my first introductory note to you as Head Master at the end of a simply extraordinary year.

When it began, we were dealing with the two very important challenges posed by the continuing pandemic and by the Black Lives Matter movement. Then, in January, the second wave of COVID-19 forced us into a renewed period of fully remote teaching and learning, which only concluded in March – at about the same time we were confronted by the further challenge of Everyone’s Invited and the Westminster Testimonies. In addition, we have been seeking since January to understand how precisely the government would like us to assess pupils’ work for the purposes of GCSE and A Level this year. In each instance, we have sought to act with the integrity and probity which you would expect, notwithstanding the complexity and difficulty of the matters in hand.

It has not been easy, but I think we have made progress. ►►



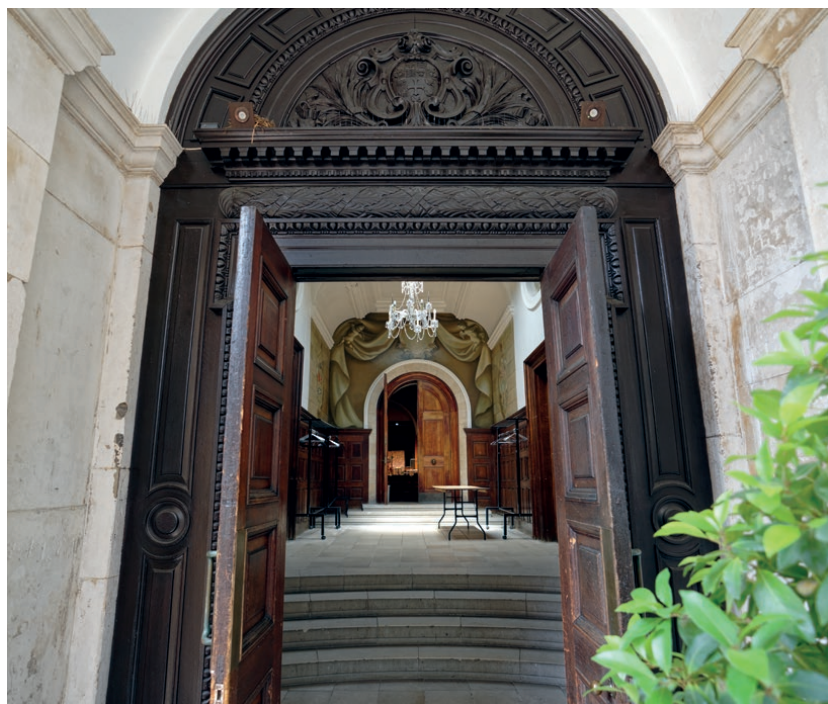
The School is now open again, and, despite the continuing need for certain restrictions, the pupils are enjoying a recognisably Westminster education both inside and outside the classroom. The Governing Body have commissioned two independent reviews, one into racism and one into harmful sexual behaviours, which will be published later in the year, and whose recommendations will inform timely and robust improvements in some key aspects of the School's policies, curriculum and training. I had already initiated last autumn, an internal consultation around our ethos and values, and planned for an internal review of our holistic curriculum, i.e. not just the academic but every aspect of the School's work and the structures that support it. The independent reviews will now feed into these initiatives and help us to equip Westminster for the next period of its history.

I have every confidence that this will see the School and, most importantly, its pupils continue to flourish.

It was an honour and privilege to be asked to return to Westminster, after my four years as Under Master between 2006-10, as its new Head Master, following on from my former boss Stephen Spurr, and more recently Patrick Derham. Despite my ten years' experience as Headmaster at Alleyn's, these were mighty shoes to fill, and I felt that responsibility very keenly – even before the challenges of this academic year emerged. In navigating them, I have been helped by a fantastically capable and committed staff, hugely supportive governors, and wonderful pupils and parents, all of whom – in the best Westminster tradition – have not hesitated to offer keen insight and wise counsel along the way.

I have also enjoyed getting to know members of the Elizabethan Club committee and hosting a webinar for Old Westminsters earlier this year. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months and years ahead, including some familiar (and only slightly older) faces from the noughties. In the meantime, you can rest assured that I shall strive to listen, learn and lead the School to the best of my ability through all the challenges to come, conscious of my responsibility as the custodian of a place at once ancient and progressive, and precious to so many.

**Floreat.**





# DEVELOPMENT REPORT

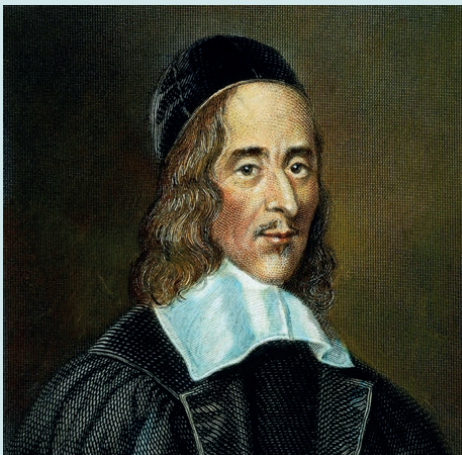
**Jane Griffiths**

*Director of Development*

In this most challenging of years, I would like to say an enormous thank you to Old Westminsters and wider Westminster community for the generous support given to the School. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the support of the Old Westminster network in both fundraising and alumni activities has been unwavering. Thank you.

In particular, I wish to mention the incredible success of the George Herbert Fund. In April 2020, the Governing Body created the George Herbert Fund to ensure current pupils were able to continue their education at Westminster, despite their family having been financially impacted by COVID-19. This is the first time Westminster School has launched a fund to support pupils already at School and differs from The Westminster School Campaign for bursaries which provides support for new pupils joining the School.

The George Herbert Fund is named after an eminent Old Westminster; a Welsh-born poet, orator and priest. Having studied at Westminster School and Trinity College



“

The George Herbert Fund to ensure current pupils were able to continue their education at Westminster, despite their family having been financially impacted by COVID-19.

£1m+

was raised by the School and OWW community for the George Herbert Fund

Cambridge, Herbert served in Parliament (1624-1625) before taking Holy Orders in the Church of England. He was noted for his unflinching care of his parishioners; bringing sacraments when they were ill, and providing food and clothing for those in need. His desire to help his community reflects our own desire to protect all those within our community today.

The savings contributed by the School together with the generosity of the Westminster community has created a fund worth over £1m to assist current pupils and their families. A record number of Old Westminsters kindly donated to this fund, and for those pupils who may otherwise have been unable to continue their education at Westminster, your gifts have helped to ensure their education for the immediate future. We thank you on their behalf.

As we begin to move forward from the pandemic, we will once again be focusing our fundraising efforts on bursary provision at the School. Our ambition is to make a Westminster education accessible for all and to do so, we hope we can continue to count on the generous support of the Old Westminster community.

As the world slowly begins to return to its new sense of normality and in-person gatherings are once again able to take place, I look forward to meeting so many of you in the UK and beyond.

With best wishes,  
**Jane**

The Development Office  
+44 (0)20 7963 1113  
developmentoffice@westminster.org.uk

# OWConnect

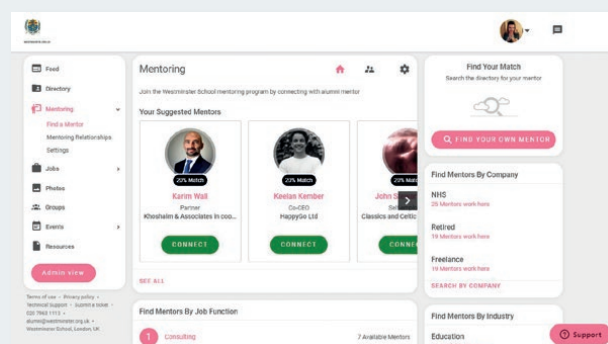
Connect and engage within the Old Westminster community

**OWConnect is our one-stop-shop for everything Old Westminster! Here, you can re-engage with friends, colleagues and classmates from your past as well as make new connections for your future.**



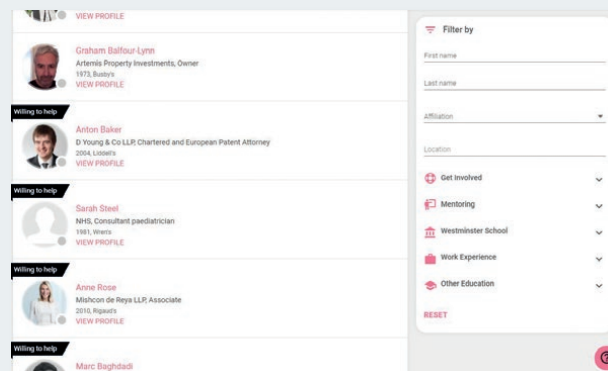
## What can OWConnect do?

**Careers and Mentoring:** Find your own mentor in a variety of industries and companies, or offer to mentor a younger OWW. ▼



**Groups and Societies:** Join any OW society, house society or group by simply indicating your interests at registration. All groups are easy to see, showing you what opportunities there are to get involved with your Westminster community. Don't see a Society that you'd like to be a part of? Start one up!

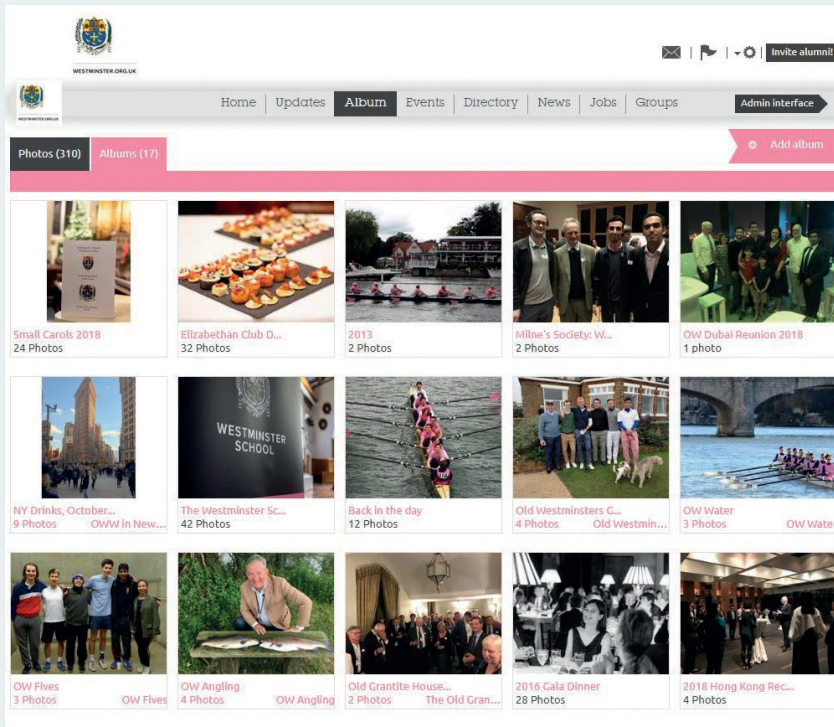
**Directory:** Search the network for OWW in your local area, somewhere you're travelling to or somewhere you're moving to – you can also invite your own OW connections (from Facebook and LinkedIn) to the platform, if they have not already joined. ▼





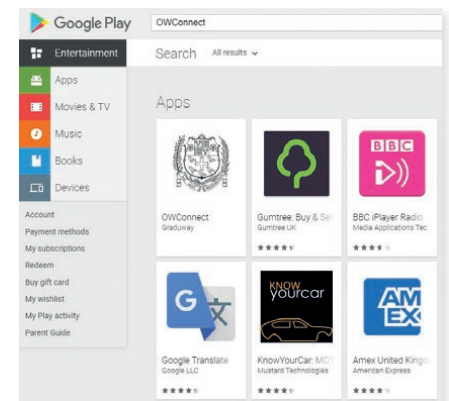
“Having moved to a new city (and country) just before the global pandemic, it was such a relief and support to find a fellow OW not too far away, through OWConnect. Several months (thanks to the lockdown) after first connecting on the platform, we finally managed to meet in person and share a coffee and memories of Westminster!”

[www.owconnect.com](http://www.owconnect.com)



This incredible network is also available through your mobile device, with the OWConnect app able to be downloaded through the GooglePlay and Apple App stores.

More information on how to access your exclusive alumni network through your phone or tablet, can be found on the main [www.owconnect.com](http://www.owconnect.com) site.



**Album:** Share your photographs from events, reunions or snaps of questionable fashion choices back in your school days. ▲

**Jobs:** Search for new career opportunities and apply directly within the platform. Or, recruit for your own company within your Old Westminster network.

**Social Media:** See all the School news from all the social media channels, in one central location.

**Events:** Register for events quickly and easily with a simple booking system, or organize your own pub night through the platform.

**Give Back:** OWConnect provides a simple way to give back to the School, either through volunteering or through philanthropic donations.

**\*NEW\* Business Directory:**

Perhaps you are in need of a graphic designer for your company, or are looking for opportunities for a career change. The Business Directory is an easy way to search through the OWW network to find connections across a multitude of disciplines.

**Over 2,100 OWW and former staff are now registered on the platform – why not join them and experience our global Old Westminster network for yourself!**

## Interview with new Head Master, Dr Gary Savage

---

*Written by Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins*

The Elizabethan Club ran a virtual 'Meet the Head Master' event in February of this year. It was hosted by Gavin Griffiths (WW, 1967-72 and Former Staff) who asked Dr Savage questions on behalf of Old Westminsters. For those OWW who were unable to attend the event, below is a partial transcript edited for clarity of reading. After the event, OWW were asked to submit any follow up questions, which Rhiannon Jones (Alumni Relations and Engagement Manager) put to Dr Savage in April of this year. Questions of a similar nature were combined so may not have been asked exactly as submitted.







Top: Gary Savage with The Right Reverend David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster

Below (left): Induction of Queens Scholars, 2020

Below (right): Little Commem, 2020



**You left Westminster in 2010 having been Under Master for four years, and ten years later you returned as Head Master. What brought you back to Westminster? What's changed in the last decade?**

It was an easy thing to decide to apply to return as Head Master because it's a school I love. I had a wonderful four years here as Under Master, I felt the School suited me, I hope I suited it, and I still feel that's the case. In many ways it hasn't changed; many of the people and of course buildings are still the same, as is all that is generated by the interaction of those places, spaces and faces. It has changed in other ways of course. We are constantly evolving and learning (particularly from our mistakes) and therefore, hopefully, improving. Above all though, my overriding sense of Westminster as I return as Head Master is that it is perhaps a slightly kinder place, but without having lost any of its intellectual spice or energy. That, to me, is a very happy development. It is wonderful to be back!

**What specifically do you love about Westminster, and why did it suit you in particular?**

It suits me because I like ideas, discourse and energy. You find that in many good schools of course. But the depth of rigour of that, coupled with a degree of non-conformity, healthy scepticism and questioning, is quintessentially Westminster.

**What do you most enjoy about being Head Master?**

I love the variety and all the interactions of being Head. One of the reasons I love Westminster is that Yard is a fulcrum – it is a meeting place, you can bump into colleagues and pupils and you can have genuinely interesting conversations. On the micro level I like those interactions and the fact that it's an environment in which we all continue to learn – I certainly learn something every day. At the macro level I find professional satisfaction in taking an institution and helping it to be even better. I completed ten years as Head at Alleyn's and it was in very good ▶▶



Chengdu Westminster School (CGI)

shape when I got there, but I hope it was in even better shape afterwards thanks to the efforts of all my colleagues, whom it was my job to lead and encourage. Along the strategic way it's those daily interactions with people and ideas and that make the job fresh and interesting every day. That's why I think all teachers stay in the profession, inside and outside the classroom; it's rich, unexpected, enjoyable and stimulating.

**What would you change at Westminster?**

If I could change anything right now, Westminster would have the ability to be fully needs-blind. We have a sincere ambition, but we don't yet have the means. So if I could make any change right now it would be to have an endowment of sufficient size to enable us to meet that aspiration in full. That will, in truth, take some time to achieve, but we are determined to do so.

**Three out of the last six Head Masters have been historians! Do you have much classroom contact?**

There are a lot of theories as to why that might be. Perhaps we are simply good at talking! Whatever the reason I have always taught History and I've never not taught in my 25+ years in schools. I currently teach a course in German History. I have a class of 6th formers and it is certainly a highlight of my week. Of all the wonderful pupils that I've taught over the years, the Westminster classroom is very special; the pupils are extraordinarily quick, full of ideas with a willingness to listen and a desire to be heard.

“  
**If I could change anything right now, Westminster would have the wherewithal to be fully needs-blind.**

**What are your thoughts about the future of private schools given both the recent press about Oxbridge, and increasing fees?**

I went to a comprehensive school and I have friends and colleagues across a range of very different institutions, both independent and maintained. What do we have in common? We're educators, we care about children, we love spending time with them and we want to help them to learn and to grow and to be good people. However, in an independent school what I cherish is the fact we have the freedom to develop an educational experience which we think best suits our pupils and enables them to flourish. However, if you're independent you have to charge fees; this is not an end in itself, nor a good, but a means to an end – the end being educational independence. I value that independence and I think it must be defended. It is good there is a plurality of options, that parents and children have choice and it's important that there are independent voices within the educational debate. It is also vitally important that those independent schools, wherever possible, raise the monies to help them ensure that it's not only those who can pay fees that attend but anyone for whom that school would be the right place to live, learn and flourish.

**You have emphasised the classroom, but what role does sport have at a school like Westminster, do you see it as a core part of the education?**

Yes I do! I think that any good school must have a properly holistic curriculum, as Westminster most certainly does. Our curriculum review will look at what





*House Football*

we are teaching inside and outside the classroom and at how they interrelate, so that the children are educated holistically and are able to make interesting connections between disciplines and activities. We hope to educate our pupils not only academically, but also physically, spiritually, philosophically and practically. It has to be that way to prepare them for life as it will be lived in any century, including the 21st. So I really care about sport. I've been down to Putney – CD Riches shoved me in a boat and I was motored about regally on the Thames watching the pupils go through their paces and it was wonderful! I've already watched House football, I've watched some fencing and rock-climbing and cricket, you name it – I cherish all of that.

**Could you explain in more detail the relationship between Westminster and the new Chengdu Westminster schools in China?**

The project was up and running when I arrived last September, it is a

scheme to open, in time, a series of schools in China which carry the Westminster name and have some of the Westminster DNA in them, which we support through advice on the curriculum and pedagogy. Apart from the educational value of this in its own right, we hope this relationship will help us to realise our ambition of becoming fully needs-blind. They are bilingual schools, not international schools, so they are for Chinese nationals. That means the Chinese curriculum is taught up until the age of 15, after which the schools can adopt international curricula, such as IGCSEs and international A Levels. But the whole point is that both in the compulsory Chinese element of the curriculum, and the post-15, the schools will be characterised by a Westminster pedagogy. In other words, those things which I have been celebrating about the Westminster classroom – dialogue, debate, questioning, inculcating a healthy scepticism and the rigorous use of evidence to answer questions and pose new ones. ➡

**Is it difficult to picture the kind of classroom interaction that you prize working in a more directed educational system?**

Our partners in Chengdu know our ethos and approach – it's been a key driver from the project's inception. Rodney Harris, former Housemaster of Purcell's and Deputy Head (Academic), is the founding Head of Chengdu Westminster so he knows exactly what our pedagogy looks like and he will promote and enshrine it as something to be cherished. There is lots of dialogue between the schools to make sure this happens. More generally, as an educator I instinctively feel it is better to engage than not to do so, particularly in view of what we are trying to add to the educational landscape in China, which we hope is distinctive. We will see how it develops – the school hasn't opened yet. But the aim is to bring a Westminster pedagogy to pupils and teachers in China and to see, through that dialogue and interaction, what we can teach and what we can learn.

**Can you speak about the School's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion?**

It's a vitally important issue. Obviously, the issues highlighted by Black Lives Matter last year continue to concern us all, and I have valued being part of the Challenging Racism Committee that was established last summer for pupils to share their experiences and thoughts about being pupils of colour at Westminster. One of the reasons I wanted to come and work at Westminster again, was because I know the quality of the discourse amongst the pupils themselves; they speak with great eloquence, insight and sense about how we can do better, how we can make sure the curriculum tells everybody's story, how the feel of the School can make everybody feel safe and welcome. We have now seen something similar happen with the Westminster Testimonies and Everyone's Invited, which have highlighted some appalling attitudes and behaviours around gender, sexism

“  
**The more diverse a community of teachers and pupils is, the more everyone will feel more at ease and more confident.**

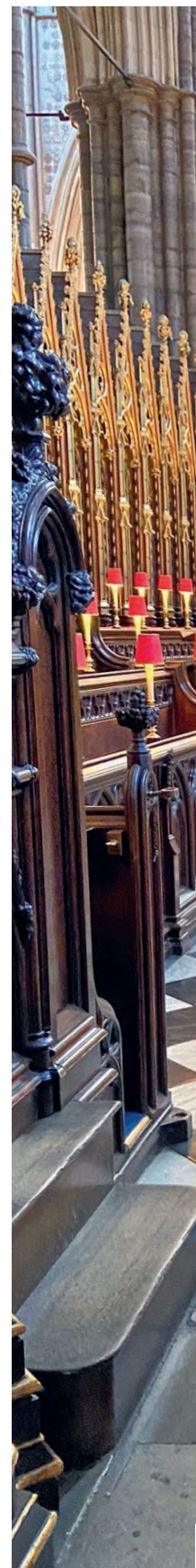
and sexual abuse which need to be tackled too. While Westminster is by no means the only place where such attitudes exist in some quarters, we absolutely have a responsibility to ask serious questions of ourselves and try to formulate responses that will make a positive difference. The independent reviews commissioned by the Governing Body will help us to do that, so that we can build a better framework for equality, diversity and inclusion in the future.

**What kind of things do pupils feel the School could do better at?**

There are lots of themes that have emerged, and we received some powerful and eloquent letters both last year, around racial abuse, and this year, around sexual abuse. Key themes would be a continuing experience inside and outside the classroom of thoughtless or unkind comments that we need to find a way to tackle so that everyone here can feel safe and secure. Everyone lives their own experience of Westminster and should have the right to do so; whether you're a pupil, a teacher, or indeed a Head Master, we all have the right to feel respected and welcome here. Part of the answer will be encouraging greater diversity in the pupil and staff body. It's a pretty diverse school in all sorts of ways, with more women teachers than there used to be and a great variety of pupils of different backgrounds and perspectives, which is excellent. However, representation of the black community is certainly not what it could be, and I am determined to find ways to tackle that. The more diverse a community of teachers and pupils is, the more everyone will feel more at ease and more confident.

**What about the curriculum?**

Pupils also think that a school's curriculum says a lot about what it values, and they are right about that; so we need to ask what our curriculum tells us about what we value, how can that be developed to create more diversity, and to give time, respect and credence to other stories and perspectives. That's one of the reasons







(and there are others) I'm running a full curriculum review next year. History is an obvious case in point here. History has always been misused for political purposes and one of the key tasks for proper historians is to deploy and promote a rigorous evidence-based approach to studying the past which counters propaganda and actually tell a version of the past which is rooted in some kind of documentary proof, however uncomfortable the results. There are lots of stories that are not told, and they are equally valid and important. How can we tell everybody's story or different stories to create something that is even richer and more textured and more stimulating for clever pupils to get their teeth into and engage with? This is what education is all about, not least here at Westminster.

#### **What is your view on the use of the Elizabethan Club?**

Any good school should want to engage with its alumni because they carry the values of the School within them; they know what the School stands for as they've experienced it first-hand. That doesn't mean to say that our values are somehow cast in aspic, they can always be reviewed and revisited; but we need to keep talking to each other so that people like me don't forget what this School means to generations of Old Westminsters. That dialogue is really important to me. There are also really important and tangible ways that OWW can help the School today; for instance, and perhaps most critically: they can promote The Westminster School Campaign for bursaries and help us to meet people who might be able to help us. There's a multitude of ways that OWW can engage, but above all I want the entire alumni community to feel valued and cherished because they've been through the experience and they know what it means.

*\*Transcript ends.  
Follow up questions overleaf\* ➡*



**What plans do you have for the School to impact the community beyond Westminster's four walls?**

It is vital that we build on the brilliant work of the School's outreach partnerships so far, particularly in London with Grey Coat Hospital School and Harris Westminster. The Platform, Platform+ and Platform Higher schemes are hugely successful examples of working within the community to make a difference, and we shall build on that, too, in the years ahead. I'm interested in the global community too, and I want Westminster to think about sharing ideas, broadening academic disciplines and making connections between them. To that end, we have launched the Horizons programme to connect with other schools and universities around the world (something which Zoom has made much easier) so pupils and teachers can learn from other institutions, gain insight into different approaches and, as the name suggests, widen everyone's horizons. I am also really excited about the work our Director of Music, Tim Garrard, is doing as Partnerships Lead of the Music Teachers' Association (MTA). Tim has just set up a partnership between MTA and HMC to help every child access outstanding music education in schools, 'joining the dots' to create a national grid of partnership. We mustn't forget the environmental context either: that is a global agenda which our young people want to commit to and we need to find new ways to support them, and to play our part in promoting a sustainable future.

**What are you most proud of in your life and career so far?**

I think I feel pride chiefly in process rather than specifics. I am proud of my work in schools over 25+ years, and proud that I have made a commitment to teaching and supporting young people throughout my career. It is something that you learn from every day; no-one ever gets it right every time, certainly I haven't, and recognising that is important. Whenever you think that you have it mastered, something happens to humble you and you learn something you didn't even know you

“Whenever you think that you have it [teaching] mastered, something happens to humble you and you learn something you didn't even know you needed to learn...”

*Portraits of Dr Busby (top) and John Locke (bottom) which hang in the Head Master's office*



needed to learn. That's an important lesson for our high-achieving pupils too, of course. On a personal level, I am proud of sustaining relationships and values and an attitude to life that I hope is reflective of my passionate interest in learning, knowledge and understanding. To be completely honest, I am proud of completing my doctorate while running a boarding house; it was a long journey through some of the highways and byways of eighteenth-century France but I got there in the end. But truly my overriding sense of achievement is about keeping it all going, taking people with me and feeling supported by them whilst sustaining those relationships. Oh, and despite a number of good reasons to give up on them, my continued support of Ipswich Town FC!

**If you could go back in time to one period of history when would it be and why?**

I would have to go back to Revolutionary France! That is what my PhD was about and I would love to see how it really was and discover the truth of what really happened, stripping away centuries of misinterpretation and misuse for political purposes of one kind or another. Albeit it would be quite dangerous, as an Englishman and as a German – I could quite possibly lose my head! In that light, it might be safer to re-read Hilary Mantel's stunning evocation in "A Place of Greater Safety".

**Which three people, alive or dead, would you invite round for dinner? And why?**

I think the three people whose portraits hang behind me in the Head Master's study wouldn't be a bad place to start. Dr Busby, a great Head Master; Queen Elizabeth, a powerful sovereign who always has my back; and John Locke, an extraordinary philosopher.

**What subject would you introduce at Westminster that isn't already on the curriculum?**

I think a good curriculum has a good blend, good interdisciplinary moments, and is thus even greater than the sum of its parts. A really good curriculum needs to be knowledge-rich and needs



Portrait of Queen Elizabeth



to be deftly curated. We need to teach pupils how to use their own critical thinking skills judiciously and efficiently. So it's not about a specific subject per se, but making sure that the balance and blend is right. Spotting connections, developing them, finding new ones: this is good practice for scholarly minds. Helping young people to articulate their own questions – and be rigorous in their pursuit of answers – is best practice for teachers. What I would like the upcoming curriculum review to accomplish is to create enough opportunity for inter-disciplinary questions to transcend the best teaching and enable really independent, high-level learning – and fun!

**How would you define 'thriving' from the perspective of Westminster School?**

For both pupils and teachers to thrive means that they can grow as people – academically, physically, spiritually, both as individuals and as part of their community. A school environment should enable outlooks, capacities, skills and feelings to grow in a way that is sustainable, balanced and healthy alongside the acquisition of knowledge. Everyone should feel respected and therefore invested in the future of Westminster. Sometimes you have to accept something isn't completely right, to metaphorically prune back the hedges, to replant and re-landscape the School so it can continue to grow healthily. This isn't easy, but one has to be responsive and sensitive and recognise, as I said earlier, that mistakes will be made and we need to have the humility and courage to learn from them. Ultimately, every individual should be able to feel at home here, valued and respected for who they are and what they bring. That, to me, is to thrive – and I am proud to have been given the opportunity to contribute. Floreat! ■



Queen's Scholars



# Voce

Our pupil-led magazine

Here are some excerpts from the inaugural edition of the pupil-run magazine 'Voce'; dedicated to celebrating diversity at Westminster. To see the full edition please go to [www.owconnect.com](http://www.owconnect.com)



## Our Own Land

*But we'll lie in it and be it, that's why,  
so freely, we call it our own.*

– Anna Akhmatova, translated from the Russian by Richard McKane

The name of this publication aims to emulate the meeting of cultures within its pages. *Voce* means 'voice' in Latin, Italian and Romanian, 'oar' in Fijian, 'fruit' in Serbo-Croatian, and 'you' in Portuguese. Each of these meanings resonates with the freedom of self-expression that we find in written words, both as writers and readers.

It is perhaps ironic that we must choose a language in which to write about our relationship with languages, cultures, nationalities; the act itself can feel limiting or like a declaration of allegiance. In discovering and defining our own land, many of these pieces therefore interweave English with phrases from mother tongues, vernacular and beyond.

At Westminster, we're so used to the diaspora that surrounds us that we often forget to appreciate the

backgrounds and memories of our classmates, teachers, and staff. These poems, short stories and personal reflections transport us across the world, from Argentina to Sri Lanka to Finland, while the translations from Russian and Ancient Greek are a reminder that time and language need not be barriers to understanding.

Diversity today is an undeniably charged word, carrying various political connotations in each of our minds. The word itself emphasises our differences, a source of inspiration for some and division for others. This magazine proudly celebrates the many nationalities, ethnicities, and ancestral roots upon which the modern Westminster School is built. Yet what makes each of these pieces so striking is not their removal from our own lives, but their familiarity: precious time with our grandparents,

hope and self-doubt, the inexplicable warmth of *hygge*. At times, they remind us that we can still do better: diversity is at the core of the social harmony and intellectual growth that we so prize at Westminster, not in opposition to them.

The following works are jubilant, defiant, incisive, and reflective. Many explore the migratory journeys of their parents and grandparents as well as the complexities and frustrations of belonging. Most of all, they are proud reclamations of our unique identities, rooted in our common humanity as citizens of the world and as Westminsters.





---

## Poetry

### Sketch 1993

His studio is frayed and threadbare. The bookcases are overflowing – venerable volumes are stuffed into the narrow space. A grimy broom leans against the wall, breathing heavily after a difficult day. A simple bunk squats sadly in the corner.

He lies motionless. Slumped across the easel. The two moss-coloured plastic bags strewn on the floor. Vessels in which his entire being will be stored.

Those sacrosanct 64 kilograms will tomorrow be all that he has left of six decades of toil. On his bed are masses of works, all stacked upon each other like the Tower of Babel – a charcoal self-portrait floats precariously above an oil pastel sketch.

Another fleeting glance back at the sacks. Now he takes the role of his forefather Noah – forced to leave the majority behind. Only 20 pieces allowed; a derisory, almost laughable amount.

Born as Meyer, son of Yankel.  
Gradually mutated into Mikhail, son of Jacob.

As long as he has his tools, he will be neither excited nor resistant.

The next promised land awaits.

An anaesthetising numbness envelops him like a woollen rug.

My great-grandfather picks up his brush and starts to smear.

By Daniel

---

My great-grandfather was a very talented artist and part of the USSR Artists' Union. When my family left the Soviet Union for America in 1993, he was forced to leave nearly all of his life's work behind. The Soviet authorities allowed him to take only 20 pieces of art abroad, which was hugely difficult for him. He was a very isolated character and art was his preferred medium for expressing himself. I never managed to talk to him about his experiences because he died before my birth.

### Not Just a Land of Snake-Charmers

Savour

The cool mango lassi trickling down your throat  
The world-famous Chicken Tikka Masala,  
The multitude of enticing cuisines, from  
The kashmiri pulao of the North, to  
The masala dosas of the South, to  
The dhoklas of the West, to  
The fish curries of the East  
The endless variety of exploding flavours –  
India, indeed, has a strong taste.

India has a unique sight.  
Of pleading beggars in tattered clothes  
Of stray dogs and mooing cows  
Of littered streets and congested roads  
Of polluted skies  
Above slums and shanty towns.

Unbearable as it may seem,  
Instead of closing your eyes  
Wonder at –  
The majesty of the *Taj Mahal*  
The glitzy malls and *Bollywood* movies  
The preening peacocks dancing in the rain  
The vibrance of the bustling *bazaars*  
The lush and verdant jungles  
The towering snow-clad Himalayas and smooth sandy deserts  
The bright colours of *Holi*  
The dazzling *diyas* of *Diwali*  
A kaleidoscope of colours –  
India, indeed, has a unique sight.

India has a surreal feel,  
Of old and outdated traditions  
Of hectic rushes everywhere  
Of being lost in a crowd  
Of clutter and clamour  
Reminiscent of a bygone era.  
Unbearable as it may seem,  
Instead of cringing at the touch  
Experience –  
The pulsating energy of a cricket stadium  
The welcoming warmth of people  
The captivating cohesion of cultures  
The thriving metropolises  
The grit and determination of the youth  
The calm and peace of yoga  
An all-encompassing sensation of spirituality – India,  
indeed, has a surreal feel,  
Felt only by opening your heart and mind to it.

By Aarav

## Short stories

### **Semo Paroni**

*"Semo Paroni" is a dialectic expression from the Veneto region of Northern Italy. Literally translated, it means, "We are the bosses", but it comes to mean, "We can do whatever we want, we're in control". It has an impish feel and conveys a sense of independence above convention or reason.*



Alvise only bought the ticket on the spur of the moment, because the woman at the newsstand couldn't find the right change for his Gazzetta dello Sport. He never really thought he would win "The Holiday Weekend of Your Dreams". He just filled in the entry form with his address, put the ticket in his pocket, and forgot all about it.

Fast forward two weeks and three days. A man with an Armani suit that must have cost more than the average Lamborghini and a moustache that had been gelled into shape at least four times that morning showed up on Alvise's doorstep. He was brandishing what looked like some strange cross between a golden ticket and a Domino's pizza ad. Alvise didn't quite know what was going on but began to feel slightly queasy. "Con-gra-tu-lations," moustache-man intoned, "Youuu have won the holiday weeeeeek-end of your dreams!"

Carlotta heard the noise and was walking towards the commotion from the kitchen where she had been making herself a cup of barley coffee, because she wanted to cut down on caffeine and was looking forward to a quiet weekend at home. Carlotta is like that: she likes it quiet and easy. Alvise intercepted her on the stairs and explained rather sheepishly that he had won a lottery and that they were going to be spending the weekend in the poshest and most glamorous hotel around Treviso, the Villa Mocenigo Resort. After the volcanic eruption filled with "Why?-what's-wrong-with-a-weekend-at-home-o!" sulphate gas had subsided, Alvise reluctantly went downstairs and told the man that they were over the moon and coming immediately.

They changed into their best clothes and rode off to the hotel in their Vespa. They were warmly greeted at reception, where an awkwardly attractive receptionist informed them that their "common wearing apparel simply wouldn't do", and that they "would have to change into some more suitable attire." Of course, they didn't have anything she would have found acceptable, so they weren't allowed down to dinner and had to take it in their rooms. This did, however, have a considerable plus side, especially for Carlotta: they didn't have to meet any of the other guests. The room itself was large enough for a king to live in, and, as the swathes of waiters and chamber maids and room-service attendants made sure they wouldn't forget, that was because one had (Umberto I between the years of 1872 and 1890). Then a camera crew burst in to take photographs of "The Lucky Winners" to put in the local newspaper. Enough was enough. Imagining themselves on the front page of the Eco di Treviso was just too awful. Carlotta and Alvise looked at each other. "Just a second," said Carlotta, deftly picking up their duffle bag and giving Alvise a Significant Look. They calmly left the room, leaving everyone behind, speechless and in disbelief.

Alvise and Carlotta jumped onto their Vespa – Alvise riding pillion behind and Carlotta doing the steering, because Alvise was never too comfortable switching above third gear. They rode off into the sunset, stopping only to give their "golden ticket" to the man at the gas station because they had no money to pay for fuel. They looked at each other, laughed, and Alvise said, "Dai, Carlotta, semo paroni."

By Sebastiano



---

## Perspectives

“

It's a bizarre word: you can't know it unless you live it, and you can't really live it unless you know it.

### **Hygge and What it Means to Me**

Hygge is a feeling, not a thing. It is an indescribable, untranslatable word. It's the feeling of waking up on your birthday knowing that you have a whole day ahead of you. It's the feeling of waking up on Christmas day and running downstairs to open gifts with your family. It's the feeling of being with people who you care about and people who care about you. It's a bizarre word: you can't know it unless you live it, and you can't really live it unless you know it. And the strange thing about it is that you don't know if it feels the same for you as it does for other people.

It's the sort of word that you will never ask what it means. Asking someone to describe it in a finite number of words is impossible. It's like describing happy or sad.

When I was little, I would never ask my mum what hygge meant even though I had never come across the word. It's as if you're born with it, it's a natural feeling. The only way to feel it is by being there, in the moment.

You would and should never ask a Dane what it means, as they will look strangely upon you. But if you ask a person of a different nationality what it means they wouldn't even recognise the word.

For me, hygge is being with my family, whether that is my siblings and I or if I'm together with my grandparents and my cousins. The one prominent moment that comes to head when I think of hygge is playing cards with my parents while the fireplace is crackling on Christmas Eve. It's being with the people you love and enjoying yourself. Hygge is a feeling that surrounds you and embraces you.

By William



## News from the School



*Mrs Kate Jefferson,  
Master of Westminster  
Under School*

### **NEW MASTER OF WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL ANNOUNCED**

***Mr Mark Batten, Chair of the Governing Body of Westminster School, announced that the Governing Body had appointed Mrs Catherine (Kate) Jefferson as the new Master of Westminster Under School.***

Mrs Jefferson succeeds Mr Mark O'Donnell, who retires due to ill health, after four years of outstanding leadership of the School, and Dr Steve Bailey, who has been Interim Master since September 2020. Mrs Jefferson will work closely with Dr Bailey (who will remain Interim Master until August) to ensure the smoothest possible handover.

The appointment follows an extensive search. A very strong list of candidates applied for the post, from which Mrs Jefferson was ultimately and unanimously selected.

Mrs Jefferson grew up in Hampshire. She read Law at Girton College, Cambridge before completing an LLM in European Trade and Commercial Law at St Chad's College, Durham. More recently, Catherine gained her NPQH qualification at the Institute of Education, UCL. She has worked within the Future Academies Trust for the last seven years, as the Headteacher of

Pimlico Primary and then of Millbank Academy. A keen runner and swimmer, she enjoys keeping active and is a trained yoga teacher. She is married to Oliver, an RAF doctor. They have a young son, Rupert, and a cockapoo, Doodle. In the holidays, they enjoy spending a lot of time in Cornwall, both on and in the water.

Mrs Jefferson says: "It is an honour to have been invited to be the new Master of Westminster Under School. I am grateful to the Governing Body for their faith in me and I very much look forward to getting to know the School, and working with staff, pupils and the whole Westminster community. The affection for the School is clear from everyone I have met, and I am privileged to be leading the Under School family forward over the many years ahead."

Mrs Jefferson will join a progressive and exciting school in very good heart, with outstanding academic and co-curricular achievements, and a track record going back many decades of preparing pupils for Westminster School and other leading independent schools.

The Governing Body has every confidence that this will continue under Mrs Jefferson's leadership.





**FORMER HEAD GIRL DELIVERS TED TALK**

*Darcy Dixon (HH, 2017-19) gave her TED Talk on ‘Gen Z: How a Generation Defined a Pandemic’ in which she explored how young people have been creative in generating an online sense of community during lockdown, and how they have continued to fight for the many causes they are passionate about, regardless of the barriers that might stand in their way.*

**WSBC NAMES THREE NEW BOATS AFTER OW WATERMEN WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR**

*Henry Lionel Storrs attended Westminster on a King’s Scholarship in 1912. He won Full Pinks for rowing, was a corporal in the School’s Officer Training Corps, and helped his House win the Singing Cup in his final year at the School.*

Despite being awarded a full scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, Storrs took a commission in the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. In July of 1917 he completed his pilot’s training, and served successfully between December 1917 and June 1918. On 15 June Storrs was wounded in a firefight with ten enemy planes, and died of pneumonia 5 days later. He is buried in the Longuenesse [St. Omer] Souvenir Cemetery.

*Gavin Ferguson Young attended Westminster School, as his brother Fergus Ferguson Young did before him, joining Rigaud’s House in September 1913. In 1917, Gavin became both Head of Water and Monitor for Rigaud’s, before leaving the School in July of that year – eager to become a pilot. He joined the Royal Naval Air Service and in March 1918 was commissioned Flight Sub-Lieutenant. On 2 September 1918*

he was reported missing, and later killed in action. His Sopwith Camel F1 was seen diving steeply on a ground target and broke up while flying behind enemy lines. He is buried in the Vaulx Hill Cemetery in France.

*John Brown Hugh Terres joined Westminster School in September 1910, where he was admitted to Ashburnham House. ‘Hugh Terres’ (as he was commonly known) was an active debater, rower and competitor in House tug of war competitions, as well as a stalwart member of the Westminster Officer Training Corps. Hugh Terres then went on to study at Christ Church, Oxford in 1915, where he would become a keen artist.*

Terres enlisted in the French Foreign Legion using his dual American-British heritage in 1917, rising to the rank of flying officer, and was attached to the English bombarding group, 214 Squadron. In August 1918, Terres was transferred to the Italian front to conduct a secret mission; transporting new Italian Caproni bombers to France. On 17 August 1918 his Caproni bomber ran out of fuel at low altitude near Milan, and Terres was killed in the crash. He is remembered on the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial, in Versailles.

We will remember them.



Henry Lionel Storrs Boat



Gavin Ferguson Young Boat



John Brown Hugh Terres Boat

# News from the OWW Community

DAVID FITZSIMONS  
(LL, 1960-65)



***“This WHO photograph shows me outside the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, on the 3rd February 2021 as part of the WHO/China joint study into the origins of COVID-19.***

Despite the rigours of the four-week journey (four legs each way) and stay, it was an extraordinary and worthwhile visit. Although the first two weeks were locked away in isolation in a comfortable hotel, the time was filled every day, literally, with video meetings, from early morning till late evening. The Chinese were busy presenting the data that they had collected over previous months in request to a programme of work previously agreed between WHO and the Government of China. The investigative team was centred on three working groups: epidemiology, molecule epidemiology and bioinformatics, and animals and the environment. The WHO team included internationally renowned experts, as well as WHO experts and support staff, working together with their Chinese counterparts.

After two weeks, which involved regularly testing for COVID-19, we transferred to another hotel where we were kept in less-stringent quarantine conditions, although still restricted to one wing of the hotel, one path around the hotel (and not outside the grounds), separate catering facilities and eating

area, and separate transport to and from the hotel to every destination. Every day then had face-to-face meetings with Chinese counterparts and officials as well as visits to various sites and people that we had requested. Locations included two hospitals that were closely involved with the first cases of COVID-19, all severe, in December 2019; the Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market which was the initial focus of investigations given that several patients, but not all, had links with the market; city and provincial centres for diseases control and prevention; the Wuhan Institute of Virology itself, a Sino-French modern BSL-4 facility (although contrary to popular misconceptions the visit was not mandated as an inspection of the laboratory); and then a community centre to hear about the personal experiences of citizens who were part of the 76-day shutdown of the city. Each visit included lengthy discussions.

The Huanan market itself was a grim place. Still empty after massive decontamination over three months after its closure on the first day of 2020 and closed to the public, it remained dark, gloomy, ill-ventilated and pervaded by a smell of rotting remains; even the Chinese scientists commented on that. The accumulated evidence pointed to it having played a role in the outbreak, but more as a place where viral infection had been amplified rather than it being the source of the introduction of the virus into human beings.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology is an elegant modern laboratory complex, opened for work in 2018. A tour outside the laboratory was followed by detailed discussions of the bat virus material held and their sources, procedures undertaken, laboratory practices and safety, and the health of personnel. The information gathered together with extensive further information, published and unpublished, molecular epidemiological data and epidemiological data including spatial-temporal analyses of cases made it extremely unlikely that the

laboratory was the source.

More discussions took place in the hotel after the visits, day after day, the final ones lasting until four in the morning. Agreements were reached about what was known, what was not known and what future research needed to be done. The main conclusions were that the coronavirus had not been circulating in Wuhan before late November 2019, but then spread widely causing multiple infections that caused no symptoms or only a few symptoms. It was only when severe cases emerged that the outbreak was recognized at which stage as one of the doctors involved put it: “our concern was to save lives; clinicians don’t think like epidemiologists.” Evidently there had been a jump by the virus from some as-yet unknown animal source to human beings, and that transmission had been facilitated at the wet market, but not exclusively. The virus SARS-CoV-2 can survive on frozen surfaces and the transmission on frozen materials and food products is another possible route of transmission.

The overall conclusion that was presented at a long press conference in mid-February was that the most likely conclusion was that the virus jumped from an intermediate host (as yet unknown) to a human being and then spread rapidly between people. It is possible that the virus came directly from its reservoir (possibly bats but still not known) to humans. Introduction through a frozen food source cannot be ruled out entirely whereas introduction through a laboratory incident is considered to be extremely unlikely.

The work is not over; it is merely a beginning, with more studies planned (and needed) – the formal title of the study was “the China part”. Many more will need to be done across the world before firm statements can be made about the origin of SARS-CoV-2. Meanwhile much work remains to be done to protect the world against the next pandemic to be caused by a virus coming from the animal world as we continue to invade and abuse it.”



---

**MARTINE SOBEY**  
(LL, 2002-04)

***Martine and another OW, Tony Staples (BB, 1999-04), are fundraising for a new community hub in north London. Inclusion is at the heart of their project, creating a place for the diverse group of neighbours to come together in the wake of COVID-19.***

The Common Rooms for Clapton is being proposed by Clapton Commons, a grassroots organisation in North Hackney, London. They had set a target of £58,000 to raise by 1 May 2021 to fit out the large undercroft, a space of approximately 250 sqm, at St Thomas Church, Upper Clapton. Architect OW Tony Staples has developed an exciting vision for the currently empty hall to become a community canteen and kitchen, exercise studio, ground floor event and workshop space, as well as creating six studio/meeting rooms.

The new community hub will provide a number of much-needed flexible spaces to allow them to support a range of new and existing projects to help the local community as it rebuilds after the pandemic. From food bank drop-in sessions to after-school clubs, one to one counselling sessions and multi-generational meals. The project will also support a mentoring service for young people and a community Meal Service by Carib Eats founder Ali Kakande.

If you would like to find out more please visit [www.spacehive.com/the-common-rooms-for-clapton](http://www.spacehive.com/the-common-rooms-for-clapton)

---

**DAVID VAN REST**  
(GG, 1947-52)

***Over Christmas David's son down-sized him to a flat in Amersham to be near him, and he is still dealing with the consequent need to discard and redistribute.***

Since August he has been trapped by COVID with his partner in The Netherlands unable to return. Zoom, Team, FaceTime and emails have been great consolations.

**WILL PROCHASKA**  
(MM, 1996-2001)

***Last year Will took up the role of CEO of Gambling with Lives; a charity established by families bereaved by gambling related suicide, to campaign for reform of gambling legislation in the UK and to provide support for those bereaved.***

This year gambling legislation is being reviewed by the UK Government so there couldn't be a more important time to campaign for changes to the regulation of an industry that causes harm to 1 in 5 people in the country. Will welcomes the support of anyone in the Old Westminster network, particularly anyone with lived experience of harm caused by gambling, who wants to engage with this cause at such a critical time.

---

**THOMAS STERNER**  
(AHH, 1965-69)

***Last year Thomas assembled a group of colleagues and wrote an important article in which they question the conclusions of the Nobel Laureate in Economics, William Nordhaus.***

He says that the World should aim for an "optimal" climate policy that would imply 3.5 to 4 degrees C of warming. They show, using his Integrated Assessment Model DICE, but with more reasonable parameters, that it would instead be optimal to aim for targets in line with the Paris Agreement – below 2 degrees Centigrade.

The article reference is Hänsel, M., Drupp, M. A., Johansson, D. J. A., Nesje, F., Azar, C., Freeman, M. C., Groom, B. & Sterner, T. (2020) Climate economics support for the UN climate targets. Nature Climate Change. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0833-x>

---

**HELEN WHATLEY**  
(GG, 1992-94)

***Helen became Minister of State for Heath (Minister of Care) last February.***

**HILARY TOULMIN**  
(DD, 1992-94)

***Hilary completed her Wellcome Trust Research Fellowship at the Centre for the Developing Brain at KCL/St Thomas' where she developed techniques in functional magnetic resonance imaging of the new-born brain, using these techniques to investigate neurodevelopmental outcome after preterm birth.***

She was awarded a PhD in Neuroscience in 2020 so is still waiting to celebrate!! She lives in Cambridge with Martin and their three children and works as a paediatrician looking after children with neurodevelopmental problems such as ADHD and Autism.

---

**NEIL WILSON**  
(DD, 1982-87)

***Neil left Westminster in 1987 and went onto study architecture at Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes) and The Bartlett at UCL.***

He set up his first architectural practice in 1995 and has been busy ever since. Having recently completed 25 years of architectural practice he has cofounded a new venture called For The Common Good; [www.forthecommongood.co.uk](http://www.forthecommongood.co.uk)

For The Common Good is a collaborative consultancy providing independent client advice to socially conscious clients that want to create buildings and places that have a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

---

**NICHOLAS VAZSONYI**  
(AHH, 1976-78)

***Nicholas began as Dean of the College of Architecture, Arts & Humanities at Clemson University (South Carolina, USA).***

And the following was published: *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Eds. Mark Berry & Nicholas Vazsonyi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

**CHRISTOPHER MARTIN**  
(BB, 1952-56)

### **A Crustie in Rebellion**

***“There seemed to be nothing else for it. With science on my side, a dozen grandchildren, octogenarian status, dimly perceived guilt at my part in helping to risk the planet’s future, something needed to be done. So I joined Extinction Rebellion. XR meetings at the Malcolm X centre got me going. Meetings of perhaps 200 people of all ages were well organised. I attended training days on Non-Violent Communication and Non-Violent Direct Action.***

The importance of the Affinity group – the basic building block of XR – quickly became clear. There were sessions on printing T-shirts and flags, making banners, the legal implications of actions, learning our rights, mutual support, respect for the police and for those inconvenienced by unlawful activity, transport and cooking arrangements, all aimed at the forthcoming rebellion in London. Good vegan food was always available. I declared myself arrestable, and joined a climate emergency walk around Bristol. This included a die-in when we all lay down feigning death. Some of us found this pretence easier than others. Lying there under a blue sky involved no hardship. This only occurred when I felt a small hand exploring my scalp. Initial pleasure quickly turned to pain when the hand started enthusiastically removing clumps of my hair, until its owner was distracted by her father.

Bristol had been allocated the Home Office, where I found myself centred for a couple of days, not 100 yards from where I had lived as a housemaster at Westminster. Pop up tents popped up and a kitchen was soon established. A people’s assembly was convened in the roadway. There were lectures from well informed people. We novices learnt songs, though veterans knew them already. People shared food, stories, aspirations, and guessed at what the police reaction was likely to be. A sense of mutual appreciation permeated the

crowd where age, even extreme old age, did not appear to be a handicap. The Home Secretary, perhaps wisely, made herself scarce.

On the third day, the police started making arrests. Politely, and with good humour, each of us was warned that we were in breach of Section 14, and those not wishing to be arrested were invited to stand up and clear their belongings from the roadway. I did so, since our own group’s action was planned for the second week and I didn’t want to compromise it. We were slowly but inexorably kettled back down Marsham Street via Victoria Street to the Sanctuary outside the Abbey. This took several hours and felt rather sadly like a sort of retreat, even a capitulation, though morale remained remarkably high. The Red Brigade moved silently among us, a presence at once both disturbing and poignant. Everyone helped carrying all the clutter that goes with a large scale camp. I found myself carrying a collection of long bamboo poles whose function remained obscure until they arrived at Oxford Circus a few days later. And thence up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square. All this time, and for the first time in any of our lives, we enjoyed a quiet, traffic free space in the city.

Trafalgar Square felt like the end of the line. Camp was set up again, and soon took on a semi-permanent aspect. The police showed admirable restraint throughout. Some from Avon and Somerset to whom I talked were intrigued to be in the capital on duty and took photos to show their families. The one unnecessarily vindictive act was the decision to play the fountains all night and block the usual out-flow valves so that the tents would be flooded. Which they duly were.

Arrests started again the following morning as the police started to clear the roads. Handing out information and apologetic leaflets, one quickly realised that tourists were keen to learn more. Disconcerted commuters were understandably much less willing to engage with us rebels.

The following week was the time for our specific action. We planned to highlight BlackRock’s dire record of investing a large part of its \$6.5 trillion in deforestation and fossil fuel mining. Their UK offices, housing 5,000 employees, are just behind the Bank of England. We were to set up a dining table, with cutlery, crockery and a waitress service, where four of our number would consume money under a large banner announcing, “When the last tree is cut down, the last fish is caught, the last river poisoned, you will find that you cannot eat money.” Meanwhile, others of our number were to glue themselves to the front windows of their glossy headquarters.

*“When the last tree is cut down, the last fish is caught, the last river poisoned, you will find that you cannot eat money.”*

And that is what we did. Things were complicated by the fact that the main XR action had moved from Westminster to the City that very morning accompanied by squadrons of police, a large van of whom arrived outside BlackRock at exactly the same time as we did. Fortunately, our leader’s fleetness of foot enabled her to outrun her pursuers to glue on to the glass fronted entrance. There she remained while our diners joyously set about chewing – though not digesting – volumes of cash. We were soon surrounded by media, BlackRock employees on their lunch break and police reinforcements, some of whom expressed sympathy with our cause. After 90 minutes, by which time our point had been made, the police tactfully suggested we should be on our way. So we packed up and went back to Bristol.

Was it a successful action? It’s for others to determine, though the fact that Aljazeera, CNBC, YouTube and much of the national and local press



carried accounts of our meal suggests that it was well worthwhile. More significantly perhaps, the active New York campaign to discredit BlackRock's record on climate change was delighted with us. And the Financial Times in its leader quoted a former chief executive of Unilever saying that in terms of achieving sustainable development goals, "the cost of inaction is rapidly becoming significantly higher than the cost of action." Perhaps street theatre plus arrests is a winning formula. We must bear this in mind when planning our next action."

**ELLIE WANG**  
(DD, 2011-13)

***Ellie (DD, 2011-13) and her sister Livia (PP, 2009-11) started up two creative spaces in South London with their family and after a couple of years of being up and running, there are some exciting things coming up on the programme.***

Livia is the Creative Director of the Van Gogh House London:

The Van Gogh House London, otherwise known as 87 Hackford Road is a Grade II listed terrace in Stockwell, now run as an archive and centre for contemporary art. The house gains its name from its most famous tenant, the painter Vincent Van Gogh, who lived there in 1873.

A space for research and learning, the Van Gogh House hosts exhibitions and residencies alongside a programme of tours, talks and education activities. Established as a site of creative production pairing contemporary art and design with a sensitivity to materials and craft, the Van Gogh House remains dedicated to celebrating the building's entire 200-year story alongside preserving Van Gogh's remarkable legacy.

The most recent project from VGH is "On the Western Window Pane", a new year long fundraising project organised



by the Van Gogh House, presenting 12 artist designed posters in its front, west facing window. Envisaged as a simple but direct way of making the house accessible to the public, artists were invited to create posters drawing out the many-layered narratives from the building's remarkable history. Each artist has taken their own approach to topics ranging from domesticity and mental health to coming-of-age and unionism. The posters are all for sale as limited edition prints with one release each month from April 2021 – March 2022! You can also attend workshops, talks, tours and residency and for more programming check out their website [vangoghhouse.co.uk](http://vangoghhouse.co.uk)

The other space, San Mei Gallery is just round the corner and Ellie and Livia are both co-directors there. They think of Van Gogh House and San Mei Gallery as being sister-spaces, operating under the same umbrella but with distinct identities.

San Mei Gallery is an independent space for contemporary art in South London, committed to research-led, educational and collaborative exchanges. Operating with an artist-led approach, they support artists and curators to experiment with new ideas.

They also run regular open calls and artist residencies, as well as operating a small number of artist and sound studios in our building.

ONE is a group exhibition in collaboration with San Mei gallery, curated by Subsidiary Projects and Jeanette Gunnarsson.

The exhibition brings together five artists, Johnny Izzat Lowry, Robin Megannity, Jessica Wetherly, Ellie Pratt and Shinuk Suh, in an exploration of loneliness and isolation. ONE, the loneliest number – considers isolation as a physical space that we all inhabit. Questioning what it means to be solitary, outside of and isolated within our contemporary, globalised and digital world. ONE explores this notion, not in the sense of the misanthropic, but considering the structural, institutional, political and personal perspectives. Conceptualised in November 2019, prior to the current pandemic, the concept of the exhibition became an omen of what was to come. The five artists have been able to further question the notion of "ONE" throughout the year and have generated work reflecting on this theme, as "isolation" takes on a new dimension and meaning.

### **JACK GATACRE** (BB, 2007-10)

***Last summer Jack kayaked just over 500 miles around much of Scotland in a fortnight from Pittenweem, Fife past Edinburgh, Glasgow, Isle of Bute, Crinan Canal, Fort William, Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee and raised almost £15,000 for the Fishermen's Mission in honour of his fiancée's father who retired from 50 years of fishing 2 years ago.***



He had raised corporate sponsorship from Fishermen's Friend, The Fishmongers Company, G and J Wilson Fishmongers, The Coop and a few others as well as appearing on local radios including BBC Radio Scotland and a couple of local newspapers too. He also met MSP and MPs along the route including Willie Rennie. He made a website and YouTube channel to increase reach, something that took a while as he did almost all his prep by hand. He won the Fishermen's Mission Fundraising of the Year Event Award 2020.

"The trip itself was an amazing adventure, kayaking 40-60 miles a day mostly alone in a variety of weather from calm to major storms and across a variety of water from urban Glasgow Canals to lochs to 20 mile sea crossings. It was one of the best things I have ever done. One of the highlights included a very generous welcoming party in a village on the North Aberdeenshire coast and watching the landscape slowly change over the days and even hours as well as the weather. Getting away from it all, months of planning

coming together and improving my health and fitness as well as managing to have an adventure in between lockdowns were also major draws of the trip. Seeing ones country by sea is a rare and magical experience I would recommend to anyone.

My next ambition (hopefully) is in 2023 to kayak 5000 miles from London to Istanbul to Samandag (a village in Hatay near the Syrian border) which will take 6 months or so and involve crossing the Channel, ascending the Rhine and descending the Danube into the Black Sea, onto the Marmara Sea and the Mediterranean. If any OWs are interested in joining or sponsoring this, please do let me know!"

Jack made a website with lots of detail and images about the trip if anyone would like more detail: [700milekayaklapofscotland.com](http://700milekayaklapofscotland.com)



### **JAMES ROSE** (GG, 1960-65)

***Over the past two years James has been investigating the 16th century black and white mural in the Coventry Charterhouse resulting in an online video talk and a submitted paper.***

*He has also had several gothic stories published in the online magazine horla.org and won the Belgrade Theatre Frankenstein-based story competition.*

### **NICOLA MASON** (PP, 2010-12)

***Nicola and her fiancé have recently started an adventure guiding business in their home, the Cairngorms National Park.***

With more staycations planned this summer they are hoping this will turn out to be good timing! Details can be found here: [www.trueadventurescotland.com](http://www.trueadventurescotland.com)

### **GUY FRANCIS** (RR, 1950-55)

***It's never too late to branch out! Guy has lived in California for 36 years now.***

Currently he lives on the Monterey Peninsula and looks out over Monterey Bay. Since reaching the age of 63, although he had never appeared on stage before, he has starred in *My Fair Lady* twice (once as Doolittle, Eliza's father, and once as Colonel Pickering); as the Captain of *HMS Pinafore*; and as Pooh Bah in *The Mikado*. He has also cycled from San Francisco to Los Angeles – a route that took 575 miles – in 7 days! "I thank Westminster School for who I am – those cold showers might have helped!"

### **COLIN BROUGH** (AHH, 1959-63)

***Colin is organising a dinner for Old Westminster members of the Garrick Club.***

The dinner will be held in September 2021, having been postponed from April 2020. Currently the dinner is oversubscribed but it is hoped that further dinners will be held in years to come. Any interested OWW with associations with the Garrick Club and who would like to attend future dinners, can write to [Colin@lighttheworld.org.uk](mailto:Colin@lighttheworld.org.uk)



**SIMON PRATT**  
(QS, 1984-88)

**In December 2020 Simon wrote an article for *The Oldie Magazine* about himself, art and mental illness and would also like to share his story here:**

“I was a ‘jumper’. On 7th February 1990, at around 11pm, at Queen’s Park Station on the Bakerloo line, I leapt in front of the approaching train. I was 18 years old. I remained conscious throughout but felt no pain. Afterwards, I told the ambulance crew to tell my parents that ‘I have bumped into a lamppost and, if they believe that, they will believe anything’.

I knew I wanted to live a week before I jumped – it was an epiphany. But I still went ahead. The only thing I can remember now is the surgeon at St Thomas’ Hospital informing me he would have to amputate my left (writing) arm from my shoulder because it had lost its pulse. The train had run over it inches from my neck. The blow to my forehead was serious. There followed a 10-hour-long operation to fish out the chips of bone that were floating around my brain. I have had a plastic plate inserted in my skull to cover the hole. A patch of skin under my right eye was shredded (amazingly the eye was not harmed) and a skin graft from behind my ear was put in its place. That ear was pinned back as part of the operation – pretty useful, as it did rather stick out. There were then four days in intensive care, tended by an attractive nurse, who sent me a postcard when she went on holiday abroad some time later. I spent three weeks in a surgical ward. The metal staples were removed from the stump where my arm had been. I immediately felt a ‘phantom limb’. A sensation akin to pins and needles ran down my ‘arm’. This phenomenon exists to this day; it isn’t painful – just irritating.

Then the real crunch came: I was going into the psychiatric unit at the hospital. I had never felt so humiliated. Dad said he was crying inside. I received a treasure-trove of get-well-soon cards. I was visited by old



schoolmates who had not liked me at Westminster School, where I had been a Queen’s Scholar. Friends from the Christian Union to which I belonged at Jesus College, Cambridge, where I was studying mathematics, often came – one of the girls is still my best friend.

Lord Justice Staughton and his wife came (my father was his clerk). Staughton paid me an immense compliment: he said I was the bravest man he had ever met. Mum was granted compassionate leave by the House of Lords, where she was a Hansard reporter. She popped in all the time. The chaplain and the maths teacher from Westminster were ardent supporters. I was in the psych ward for six more weeks. I have to admit that, after a period of adjustment, I quite enjoyed the funny farm. I was on a high; I had SURVIVED. There were some real characters inside. I had intensive art therapy, which sorted many issues out. To this day, the strangest thing of all is that the consultant psychiatrist did not believe I had a mental illness. He insisted I had had a nervous breakdown from overwork at Cambridge. He said I had the emotional maturity of a 13-year-old, and the intellectual age of a 25-year-old. This is despite my telling him a plethora of psychotic delusions and fantasies. It took another seven years, and another serious breakdown, before I was properly diagnosed with severe bipolar disorder and psychosis. I now take a gram of lithium carbonate every morning. It has saved my life.

Dad converted the attic into an artist’s studio for me – he is talented at DIY. I heard him weeping as he worked.



All his dreams for me had been destroyed. So, I started to paint with my right arm. I had been awarded an ‘A’ grade in A-level art at school – so I wasn’t starting from scratch. My first efforts were not good – the main drawback when I paint is that my hand shakes. I cannot achieve the draughtsmanship I wish I had. I enjoy painting large canvases; I can use my whole arm, sweeping over the cotton. When I paint a portrait in particular the eyes are a challenge. Improvement was gradual: the breakthrough came in 1994 when I was commissioned by the English bridge authorities to paint the card game’s world champion as the Queen of Hearts for the front cover of their magazine. That was the start of my new life and I have since had many exhibitions. I see myself as an English artist – not a disabled artist. Dressing was never a problem. I astonished the doctors because I adapted instantly to my disability. I learnt to tie my shoelaces, ski in the Swiss Alps, and serve a tennis ball one-handed. I am a keen member of Acorn Lawn Tennis Club in Edgware. I have taken on the former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash at the Queen’s Club and won a point off his serve. He is still recovering. Writing was the biggest challenge. It took six months to achieve a rudimentary standard. Even today, it is barely adequate, but now we use keyboards all the time – so it doesn’t matter. My mum, dad, sister and friends cherished me. I wouldn’t have survived without them. As the Beatles sang, ‘All you need is love’ – and medication.”

### **OLI DA COSTA** (RR, 1990-95)

**Over a difficult past 12 months for the TV & film industries, Oli has contributed to a few mainstays of popular viewing, including Netflix's *The Crown* and *Stranger Things* as well as Sky's *COBRA* and forthcoming *Extinction* series.**

As a specialist second unit cinematographer, Oli has been working in the developing field of virtual production, managing multiple cameras to deliver ultra-high resolution 360° footage for background 'plates', stunt sequences and studio lighting effects.

Along with specialist shoots, Oli worked on the third instalment of the *Long Way Up* for Apple TV+ for a year (before the pandemic) as chief technical consultant, UK-based second camera operator and DIT on the series, alongside legendary documentary film-maker, Claudio von Planta. His broad role saw Oli tapping in to his engineering background by designing bespoke camera and sound systems for the cinematographers and motorbikes, a unique media storage system capable of securely delivering footage back to the UK as the team travelled through South and Central America, and a completely custom made range of ruggedised luggage for the crew to manage over 1,000 media cards on their 3 month trip.

During the third lockdown, Oli's attentions have been focused closer to home, building a custom broadcast and web streaming studio for double Olympic Gold-winning decathlete, Daley Thompson, at his gym in Putney, London.



If you have anything that you would like to share with the OWW Community or would like to get in touch with any of those who have included news in this Newsletter please contact [alumni@westminster.org.uk](mailto:alumni@westminster.org.uk)



*The Vache Baroque Festival*

### **BETTY MAKHARINSKY** (BB, 2010-12)

**Betty, who was a keen musician at Westminster and went on to study music at Oxford and Guildhall, has recently launched *The Vache Baroque Festival*, a forward-looking open-air music venue that brings audiences first-class Baroque music in a stunning setting.**

As a professional soprano, Betty founded the festival last year in response to the devastating impact COVID-19 was having on the music sector, with the aim to provide audiences and emerging talent with a much-needed cultural outlet. Following its success last September with Purcell's opera *Dido & Aeneas*, the festival will be returning for a full season of multi-disciplinary events from 29 May to 5 September 2021, including opera, dance and drama.

Based at a beautiful country house in Bucks, patrons are warmly encouraged to explore and picnic in the grounds before each event. For more information visit the website [vachebaroquefestival.com](http://vachebaroquefestival.com) or follow on Facebook and Instagram at [@VacheBaroqueFest](https://www.facebook.com/VacheBaroqueFest) and Twitter at [@VacheBaroque](https://twitter.com/VacheBaroque).

### **MARTIN JOSTEN** (WW, 1962-67)

**The period of lockdown prompted Martin to get on with a task that he had put off for many years: to write his father's biography.**

"My father Josef was an exile from Czechoslovakia (now, minus Slovakia, called Czechia). Born in Prague (then part of Austro-Hungary) in 1913, he executed two nail-biting escapes from his country: first in 1939 from Nazi occupation and then in 1948 after the Communist coup. Once settled in England, he ran a news agency publishing "unofficial" news about Iron Curtain affairs for 36 years until his death in 1985. His many PR achievements included being the first to break the news in the West of Soviet atomic bomb tests. He also endured assassination attempts, a smear campaign, intimidation and infiltration by Czech intelligence agents. Have I wetted your appetite for more?" He is hoping to publish a limited edition of the book around the end of 2021. The proceeds will go to a Czech charity.



# The Old Westminsters' Lodge

By Casper Lawson (RR, 1977-80)

**W**hen the 24-storey Grenfell Tower caught fire, one of the many tragedies that night was that the London Fire Brigade's highest ladder, at around 30 metres, could only reach the 10th floor. A longer ladder could have enabled them to fight the fire from above the flames as it spread up the building.



Visit our website at  
[www.oldwestminsterslodge.org](http://www.oldwestminsterslodge.org)

As news of the tragedy broke, London Freemasons responded almost immediately by creating a new fund to address this need. In the last year the fund reached £2.5 million, all of which has been donated to the London Fire Brigade to buy two Super Hi-Lift aerial platforms. The 64 metre platforms, the highest in Europe, will enable the Fire Brigade to reach the top floor of other tower blocks like Grenfell. There was enough left over in the fund for us also to donate six fast responder Outlander vehicles and four bariatric stretchers, all of which are now helping save lives on the streets of London.

The Old Westminsters' Lodge (OWL) is proud to have been part of this story, as one of the many Lodges to have donated. Charity is one of the core principles of Freemasonry. We are apolitical and open to any religious faith. The aim of our ceremonies is to keep reinforcing moral messages, to try to make us, as men, the best members of society that we can be, and for each of us to live our lives as the best possible version of ourselves (womens' Lodges have the equivalent aim). These aims were formulated many centuries ago, but are as relevant today as ever.

OWL is the School's oldest alumni group. In normal, non-pandemic, years we meet 4 times a year at the School. We take our meetings seriously and then dine convivially in College Hall. Our May meeting is a 'white table' event to which all are welcome. To find out how to join in our 'serious fun', or just to find out more about us, we invite you to browse our website or contact us directly by email on [sec@oldwestminsterslodge.org](mailto:sec@oldwestminsterslodge.org)



## Interview with Artin Basirov, Chairman of the Elizabethan Club 2015-2020

---

By Rhiannon Jones-Hopkins

### **Why did you get involved with the Elizabethan Club Committee, and what made you decide to run for Chairman?**

I got involved in because I felt that there was a lack of younger OWW on the Committee and I wanted to help plan events and things that younger OWW would like to do. I became Treasurer for four years, looking after the money, and I watched the demographics change and the Committee change alongside it. When Tim Woods stepped down and there was a new Head Master I thought it was a perfect opportunity to run for Chairman. I knew from watching Tim as Chairman that the hardest thing was going to be giving up time, but I had the time, I liked seeing change and I liked improving things. I was very keen to keep that interaction between the School and the pupils and the Club strong and relevant.







**Did you have any misconceptions about the Club that you think other OWW might have, that becoming more involved with it dispelled?**

I think before I joined, the Club seemed outwardly as very exclusive. After I joined I realised the door is very much open to every Old Westminster and my perception was flawed and not down to anything in particular.

**What has changed most about the Club and Committee during your time as Chairman ?**

During my time as Chairman , there have been changes and progress and I feel we are more wholly inclusive than ever before. That change was due to time in some respect, but alas due to the people on the Committee. We made a decision early on to try and make sure that every ten year generation was represented and that younger members became more involved. We also made a big effort become more digital and interactive and have a purposeful online presence; less stuffy and more interactive. We also paid for the new OWConnect (see page 8) and the success of it relies on OWW using it and making the most of it. If there are any tech savvy OWW who are keen to offer their expertise, do get in touch with the Club. One big and unfortunate change was we lost our ability to email about 40% of OWW in 2018 due to GDPR. It has been a huge hurdle to overcome, with little power to change, but each year we get permission to email more and more OWW.

**Do you have a particularly fond memory of your time at School? Or things that you look back on that make you want to stay so connected and involved with the School and the OWW community?**

When I was at School, it was very much two-fold; there was the academic side and the social side. I got on with everybody – School felt like a place to learn and a place to make life-long friendships. Now more than I ever I remember the people and interactions much more than I remember certain subjects. Before I joined the Committee I really enjoyed coming to the Gaudies because I saw how happy people were to reconnect and see old friends and I wanted to pick up on that. The Club exists to make sure that OWW always have the opportunity to do just that; see their ex teachers who made such a lasting impact on them, see old friends and remain connected to a place where we all spent a formative part of our life.

**In the years since you became Chairman, what has been your favourite event that the Club has run and why?**

All the Elizabethan Club Dinners have been fantastic as we have been blessed with such good speakers and we sell out every year. The Elizabethan Club Dinners are also changing in terms of who comes to them – our 2019 dinner had more female attendees than male, and every year the cohort get

younger and younger! But I am going to go for the Summer Celebration at The Hurlingham Club in 2016. It coincided with an England World Cup qualifier against Colombia and I remember about 40 or so OWW all stayed afterwards to watch the match. It was spontaneous and celebratory and just a really great day. I also really enjoy the after drinks that follow the Elizabethan Club Dinners. I think anytime people stay on to mingle and don't want to leave means that you must be doing something right!

**What has been the most rewarding part of being Chairman of the Elizabethan Club?**

The most rewarding part is seeing more and more people coming back and seeing how we have got a much younger audience of people coming to events. We purposefully as a Club think of events to cater to different OWW tastes and interests. When I joined the Committee we ripped out the old rule book and started to engage with people and their changing appetites and there is even more change to come.

**Why would you encourage all OWW to become involved in the Elizabethan Club, either through attending events or getting involved with the Committee?**

Because there is something for everybody! Most people might not realise that the largest thing that we organise is giving grants for OWW to meet up and participate in sports. We are there to help, we are there to help OWW network and we are always open to suggestions. We want every Old Westminster to feel represented and excited to be an Old Westminster! There are mentors, collaborators and new friendships to be made through engaging with the Clubs' activities.

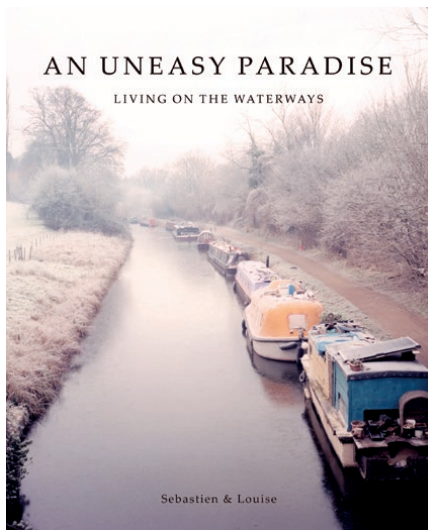
**Do you have any words of wisdom for the new Chairman?**

Listen to everyone's opinion – we have a responsibility to listen to OWW and make sure they feel represented. We as a Club are becoming more inclusive and we don't want to have a situation that people feel that they can't communicate with the School or the Club. Be the bridge for Old Westminsters to their School. The Club should serve Old Westminsters, throughout their life, connecting them to their past but also their future. OWW are passionate, knowledgeable and pay attention to detail – always appreciate that. This role takes an enormous amount of time and dedication. I have every faith that Jessica will do a fantastic job as she already deeply understands the commitment just being on the Committee takes. I wish her every success and one last bit of advice, start looking for an Elizabethan Club Dinner speaker NOW!

**Sum up your time as Chairman in three words!**

Satisfying, evolving and dedication. ■

# BOOKSHELF



## An Uneasy Paradise: Living on the Waterways

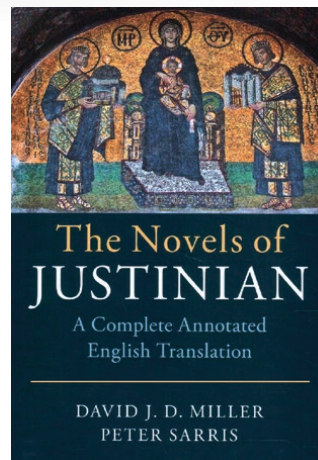
Louise Tickner (BB, 2001-03)

'An Uneasy Paradise: Living on the Waterways' is the culmination of eight years of photographic work and tells the story of the liveaboard boating community at the western end of the Kennet and Avon canal. The photographs give an intimate insight, through the seasons, of this rather private community and are accompanied by interviews, and followed by an essay, that discusses pertinent issues that jeopardise the lifestyle and contextualises them within a wider discussion of the challenges faced by society at large.

## The Road to Itacuiaxa in The Creative Writing Workshops London Anthology

Claire-Emily Martin (WW, 2009-11)

A collection of entries for the Creative Writing Workshops London 2020 summer writing competition. The book was transcribed to Braille and has a great number of beautiful illustrations.



## The Novels of Justinian, a complete annotated English translation

Translator: D.J.D Miller (QS, 1949-54), Editor: Peter Sarris

The novels comprise a series of laws issued in the sixth century by the famous Emperor Justinian (r.527-65), along with a number of measures issued by his immediate successors on the throne of Constantinople. They reveal the evolution of Roman law at the end of antiquity and how imperial law was transmitted to both the Byzantine East and Latin West in the Early Middle Ages. Crucially, the texts cast fascinating light on how litigants of all social backgrounds sought to appropriate the law and turn it to their advantage, as well as on topics ranging from the changing status of women to the persecution of homosexuals, and from the spread of heresy to the economic impact of the first known outbreak of bubonic plague. This work represents the first English translation of the novels based on the original Greek, and comes with an extensive historical and legal commentary.



## The Katyn Forest Massacre: An Annotated Bibliography of Books in English

Andrew Kavchak (BB, 1976-77)

On 23 August 1939 Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression treaty. As part of their agreement, secret protocols delineated their respective spheres of influence over the territory between them. On 1 September 1939 Nazi Germany launched the Second World War by invading Poland from the West. On 17 September the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the East. The two totalitarian powers split Poland between them. Approximately 250,000 Polish soldiers were captured by the Red Army. About 15,000 military officers, police officers and border guards were segregated and interned in three camps: Starobelsk, Kozelsk and Ostashkov.

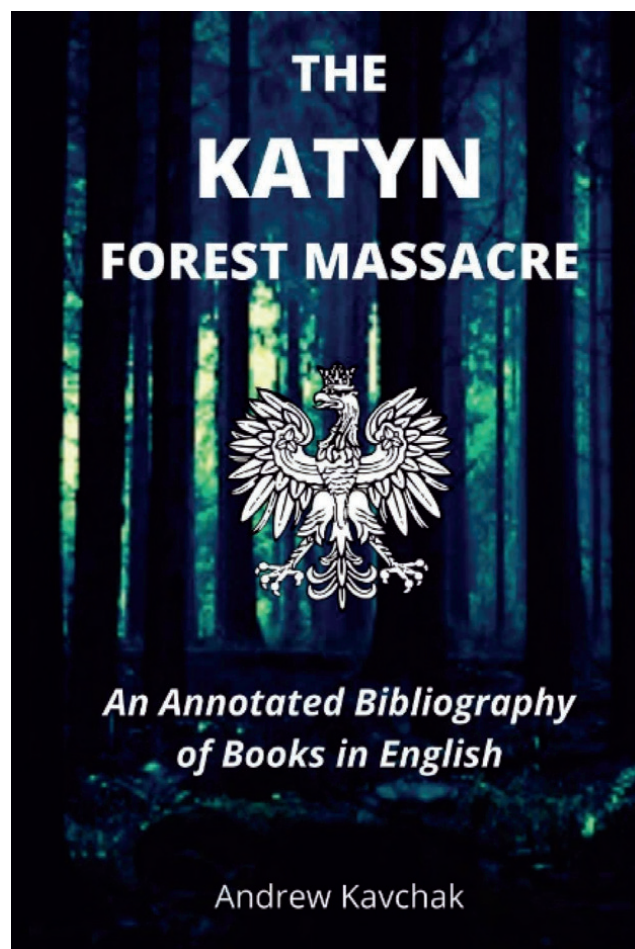
On 5 March 1940, NKVD Chief Beria provided Stalin with a written proposal to execute the Poles at the three camps as well as thousands of other Polish prisoners in the jails of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. Beria described the Polish prisoners as “sworn enemies of Soviet power, filled with hatred for the Soviet system of government”. He proposed to “apply to them the supreme punishment, shooting”. In the operation that followed in April and May 1940, 21,857 Poles were shot by the NKVD and buried in hidden mass graves.

On 22 June 1941, the Germans attacked the Soviet Union. The Soviets then agreed to release the Poles in Soviet captivity and allow General Władysław Anders to assume the command of a Polish Army to be formed on Soviet territory. But where were the officers who were held at Starobelsk, Kozelsk and Ostashkov? Polish efforts to find them were futile as the Soviet authorities dodged the issue and gave evasive answers.

On 13 April 1943, the Nazis announced a gruesome discovery in the Katyn Forest where they found mass graves containing the bodies of thousands of Polish officers from the Kozelsk camp. The Germans claimed the Polish officers were killed by the Soviets. The Soviets responded by claiming that the Nazis had captured and killed the Polish officers in 1941. This “Katyn Lie” would be the official Soviet and Communist narrative on the subject for the next 47 years.

On 13 April 1990 Soviet President Gorbachev provided the Polish Government with documents confirming that the Soviets were responsible for the Katyn Massacre. On 14 October 1992 Russian President Yeltsin revealed the text of the execution order of March 5, 1940, signed by Stalin.

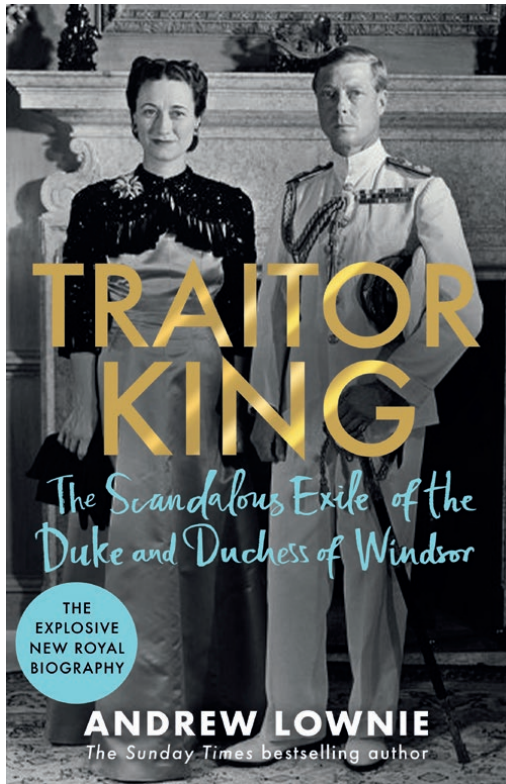
“The Katyn Forest Massacre: An Annotated Bibliography of Books in English” begins with a history of the Katyn Massacre and an overview of the literature on Katyn. The subsequent chapters discuss the authors and contents of some 38 books that have been published over the decades in English about Katyn. Each book contributed something to the evolving literature and general knowledge about the history of the



Massacre. Books were written by some prisoners who survived (Czapski and Młynarski), witnesses who were brought to the exhumations (Stroobant and Werth), diplomats and generals who tried to find out what happened to the missing officers (Kot and Anders), family members who were deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia (Adamczyk), researchers and historians (Zawodny, Ciencala, Sanford and Maresch), and authors who believed that raising awareness about Katyn was worthwhile because it might help rectify an injustice (FitzGibbon and Allen). Books written before the Soviet admission of guilt pointed an accusatory finger at the Kremlin. Those written afterward had the benefit of archival revelations that helped shed light on previously unknown details of the NKVD Katyn operation.

The Foreword is by Dr. Alexander M. Jablonski, President of the Oskar Halecki Institute in Canada.

Andrew Kavchak studied political science (M.A., Carleton University) and law (LL.B., Osgoode Hall Law School). His grandfather was among the Polish officers held at Starobelsk and murdered at Kharkov in April 1940 in what has become known as the Katyn Massacre.



## Traitor King: The Duke and Duchess of Windsor in Exile

Andrew Lownie (RR, 1980)

Sunday Times bestselling author Andrew Lownie, examines the years following the abdication of Edward VIII when the former king was kept in exile, feuding with his family over status for his wife, Wallis Simpson, and denied any real job.

Drawing on extensive research into hitherto unused archives and Freedom of Information requests, it makes the case that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were not the naïve dupes of the Germans but actively intrigued against Britain in both war and peace.

Traitor King reveals the true story behind the German attempts to recruit the Duke as a British Pétain; the efforts, by Churchill in particular, to cover this up; the reasons why the Duke, as Governor of the Bahamas, tried to shut down the investigation into the murder of a close friend, and shines light on the relationship between the Duke and Wallis, revealing it to be far from the love story it is often assumed to be.

Lownie's previous book with Bonnier Books UK, *The Mountbattens*, was a

Sunday Times bestseller and a Waterstones Book of the Year.

Matt Phillips said: 'Andrew Lownie's book is an intimate portrait of this powerful couple at odds with the monarchy – it's a story of love, treachery, murder, cover-ups, vanity, sex and infidelity. The recent explosive revelations surrounding Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan Markle have many uncanny parallels with the Windsors' story from almost a century ago. It's the perfect moment to be re-exploring this particular part of our national history as it throws further understanding on the themes of freedom and duty, love and family.'

Andrew Lownie said: 'Few books tell the story of what happened to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, after they supposedly walked into the sunset, even though Edward had another 36 years to live and his wife 50. It is a game of two halves and often assumed that all the drama was in the first. Traitor King focuses on the years following the Abdication, which are arguably the more dramatic.'

## The Cambridge Companion to Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen

Eds. Mark Berry & Nicholas Vazsonyi (AHH, 1976-78)

The Companion is an essential, interdisciplinary tool for those both familiar and unfamiliar with Wagner's Ring. It opens with a concise introduction to both the composer and the Ring, introducing Wagner as a cultural figure, and giving a comprehensive overview of the work. Subsequent chapters, written by leading Wagner experts, focus on musical topics such as 'leitmotif', and structure, and provide a comprehensive set of character portraits, including leading players like Wotan, Brünnhilde, and Siegfried. Further chapters look to the mythological background of the work and the idea of the Bayreuth Festival, as well as critical reception of the Ring, its relationship to Nazism, and its impact on literature and popular culture, in turn offering new approaches to interpretation including gender, race and environmentalism. The volume ends with a history of notable stage productions from the world première in 1876 to the most recent stagings in Bayreuth and elsewhere.





## The Performance Curve

Laura Watkins (LL, 1990-92)

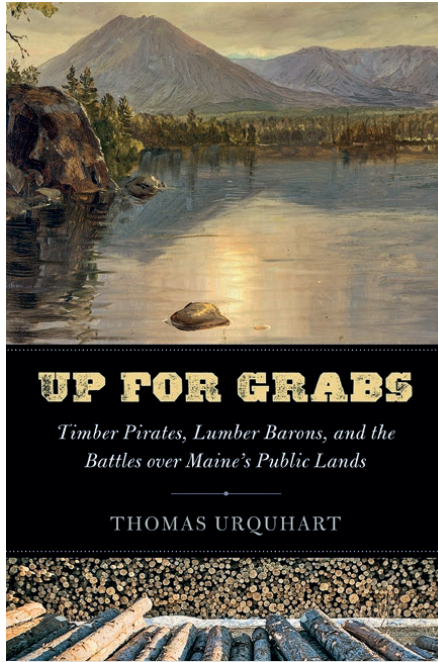
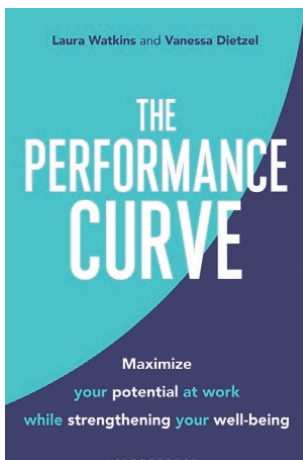
There has always been an unnecessary division between personal career guidance and advice that focuses upon the performance of an entire team or the whole organization.

For the first time, The Performance Curve unites these distinct approaches, interweaving the individual and the collective to produce a bold new holistic guide to improving business performance. Laura Watkins and Vanessa Dietzel draw upon their vast experience and research as consultants and leadership coaches to demonstrate that this unifying approach produces the most effective and sustainable results across the board.

Crucially, organizations are beginning to recognize that long-term strategies and optimized processes can only get them so far. This book demonstrates how the human element is key for making any campaign or initiative successful. Similarly, individual success cannot be achieved within a vacuum – people must consider how they can personally prosper through the opportunities available within their organization.

The book's practical advice on maximizing performance capabilities is underpinned by a robust and unique combination of neuroscience, psychological research and mindfulness. The Performance Curve is an eminently engaging and practical consolidation of the concepts, approaches and tools that Laura and Vanessa have developed over years of expert experience.

*To be published September 2021.*



## Up For Grabs! Timber Pirates, Lumber Barons and the Battles Over Maine's Public Lands

Thomas Urquhart (BB, 1958-63)

Each year thousands of men and women and families recreate on Maine's Public Reserved Lands. Most of these visitors know only that the large green areas on the map promise them access to some of the state's most magnificent places. Very few have any idea how Maine acquired them. Or that, as a conservation success, their acquisition (600,000 acres) more than rivals the celebrated purchase and gift to Maine people of Baxter State Park (210,000 acres) by Governor Percival Baxter.

The history of the Public Reserved Lands goes back to the time when Maine was a part of Massachusetts. Whenever the state sold a township of public land, it reserved 1,280 acres (a township was about 24,000 acres) to be held in trust for the settlement's future needs, especially religious and educational. Maine inherited this policy when it became a state, adjusting the amount to a thousand acres. According to the Constitution, these Public Lots could not be sold.

When wildland townships remained unsettled, Maine sold the rights "to cut and carry away the timber and grass" on these Public Lots (but not the land). The lumber companies (and subsequently paper companies) managed them as they did their own tracts. These 400,000 or so acres, scattered all over Northern Maine, wrote Great Northern's John E. McLeod, "sat there giving nobody any trouble until they were discovered in 1973 by certain politicians who wished to raise the state flag over them."

There followed an extended legal battle, with paper companies and large landowners on one side, and the State on the other. The case went on for ten years and ended with Maine reclaiming its Public Lots. It then consolidated them into Maine's Public Reserved Lands. Today, some 600,000 acres are under exemplary multiple-use management, for timber, wildlife and recreation.

Up for Grabs tells the story of Maine's Public Reserved Lands from colonial times to statehood in 1820 to the present. (It is one of the Maine Historical Society's Bicentennial publications.) With dramatic moments and colourful characters, it provides an engaging and informative history of Maine's wildlands from exploitation to conservation and sustainable use.

---

# From the Archives

Elizabeth Wells School Archivist



*A map from a copy of Hakluyt's work Divers Voyages in the school's Greene Collection.*

## Black Lives Matter

*One of the enduring images of the UK's Black Lives Matter demonstrations will undoubtedly be the toppling of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol. Many outside of the city would not have known who Colston was until 2020 – but the campaign to modify the statue's plaque, so that it acknowledged that Colston's philanthropy was built on trading over 80,000 enslaved people, had been fruitlessly continuing for years. The actions of the crowd were not a spontaneous act of vandalism but an expression of long held frustration.*



**C**olston's statue is the only one in the country to have been removed by protestors, and those responsible have been prosecuted. However, other statues across the country are now being scrutinized. At the time of writing a commission established to assess the legacy of Cecil Rhodes at Oriel College – including whether or not to remove his statue – had delayed its final report, in part due to the weight of submissions received. The Corporation of London is engaged in a dispute concerning a depiction of Old Westminster, William Beckford, at the Guildhall. The government-backed approach of 'retain and explain', championed by Historic England, is at odds with the Corporation's desire to remove the statue.

I have been giving thought to those who are memorialised around the School. Comparatively little of our portraiture was commissioned or purchased by the School, most were gifts. Names have often developed in an organic fashion; Ashburnham House is named after the building in which it was based, rather than in honour of the Earls of Ashburnham. The accretions of history we see around us have developed in a haphazard way. Moreover, even where artefacts were intended to be celebratory, they are not always interpreted in that manner – the

mixed reactions to the school's 450th anniversary statue of Elizabeth I are a prime example. History is a process of constant revision and disputation, not a single static story. The Westminster spirit is one of loyal dissent and I hope we teach all our pupils to approach their environment with a critical eye, especially when it comes to representations of power and wealth.

The other difficulty is summarised by the historian's adage – 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.' The philosopher Julian Baggini noted in a recent article that 'by our current standards, most Britons in history have been misogynist, racist and homophobic,' whether or not records

*Colston's statue, Bristol and above during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations*







Caution!

of their views have survived. We should not underestimate the cathartic value of removing figures such as Colston, or the impact of our built environment. However, David Olusoga was right to stress that ‘allowing the statues issue to get in the way of the anti-racism debate would be a mistake, and would empower objects that we mostly ignore.’

With these cautionary thoughts in mind, we have begun research into the connections between former pupils and benefactors of the school and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. There are over 26,000 known alumni and thanks to The Record of Old Westminsters, a series of published volumes providing detailed biographical information, we have been able to make some progress in identifying those who owned enslaved people. Our work has depended heavily on UCL’s Legacies of British Slave Ownership online

database, which is an excellent resource, but not without limitations. It draws on the documents produced at the point of abolition in 1833 when a number of slave-owners applied for and received compensation from the British state for the loss of their ‘property’ in the Caribbean. Although researchers are working to trace both backwards and forwards from this point, it is primarily a snapshot of the early 19th century. It also focuses on the trans-Atlantic slave trade and does not consider British activities in other colonial theatres.

At the beginning is Elizabeth I, who refounded the School in 1560 and who is celebrated annually at the School’s commemoration of benefactors service and a number of School songs and prayers. There are numerous depictions of her around the school site with the most recent and distinctive being the aforementioned statue in Yard. In ➡



## From the Archives

addition to authorising and profiting from the trade of slaves, her reign was also a period of significant catholic persecution.

However, many would argue that in commemorating Elizabeth I at Westminster, we are specifically celebrating her support of the School and commitment to education. It is also worth considering that our depictions of Elizabeth I are some of the relatively few images of women we have in an art collection inevitably dominated by dead white men. The same argument could be made for our bust of Gandhi, on display in the Brock Library, who is a rare person of colour in our collection. Gandhi's championing of non-violent protest made him an inspirational figure around the world, but he espoused racist views about Black Africans.

Richard Hakluyt has also been highlighted as a problematic figure in the School's past. Whilst he never travelled outside of Europe himself, Hakluyt was keen to promote the English colonisation of North America, in response to Spanish and Portuguese activities. There is no evidence that he supported slavery or oppression of indigenous people, although these were the outcomes of the colonial enterprise. Whilst Hakluyt's work was influential, providing inspiration to Shakespeare, he remains a little known and unstudied figure. The suggestion to name the School's new day house after him in 1987 was made by a then junior English teacher, Richard Pyatt, with a view to shedding more light on this individual.

A letter to the Head Master in the wake of George Floyd's murder mentioned John Locke's involvement in drafting the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, which stated that freemen in that territory would have 'absolute power and authority over [their] negro slaves.' Locke wrote prolifically and his attitude towards slavery has been the subject of intense academic debate for the past 50 years. Defenders of Locke note that his involvement in the Constitutions was as a secretary, paid to draft the legal document but with limited control over its contents. Locke's own writing specifically opposes this form of slavery and the oppression of indigenous peoples.

Of the 89 Old Westminsters featured in UCL's Legacies of British Slave Ownership Database only one slave owner is represented in the School's visual environment – Stapleton Cotton, whose arms are amongst those displayed up School. The current decorative scheme was designed by Head Master, John Carleton, in the 1950s, although coats of arms were displayed in the space prior to the Blitz. Cotton was presumably included for his military prowess, but we know that he was also a slaveowner who, in 1833, received compensation for 420 enslaved people on his plantations in St. Kitts and Nevis. I have long been uneasy about elements of the traditional heraldic designs which are on display up School and the



*Stapleton Cotton's coat of arms up School, with incorrect Latin motto and a 'blackamoor' head in the top right.*

*One of the pupil artworks the school selects each year to add to its collection.*





“

**Afua Hirsch has remarked that what we need at this time is ‘more history, not less.’**



*A portrait of the first eight female scholars at the school, commissioned by the College Society.*



### Thanks

Thanks to lockdown clear outs we’ve had a bumper crop of donations to the archive – many thanks to all those OWW who have given us their Westminster memorabilia and copies of their publications. Thank you also to those who have donated their time and money towards conservation. We love adding new items to our collections, which are widely used both within and outside of the school. Please keep the donations coming!

‘blackamoor’ – a stylized African head – on this particular coat of arms is a clear example of why these decorations require reconsideration.

Due to the origins of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, focus has understandably been on proponents of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. However, many controversial episodes in Westminster School’s past relate to British activities in India. Hundreds of Westminster pupils served in the East India Company in the 18th and 19th centuries. I will mention just one – Warren Hastings. Hastings was an employee of the East India Company who rose to become the first Governor General of the country. He was accused of corruption but acquitted after a long trial. Hastings undoubtedly played his part in British exploitation of India, but he also pursued a number of reforms which genuinely improved the lives of Indian citizens. In Zareer Masani’s essay on Hastings he notes that of all the Governor Generals he was ‘undoubtedly the most curious and learned of them all about Indian culture and, judging by contemporary accounts, the most popular among his Indian subjects’.

This period of British history has been glossed over in past decades. In recent years the school has actively tried to shine a spotlight on Hastings. In the 1990s the decision was made to name a room in Ashburnham House the Hastings Room and in 2014 Hastings was selected as one of the Old Westminsters to be profiled in the Head Master’s book ‘Loyal Dissent’. This is not because we wished to place him on a pedestal, but because we felt he was a complex figure, whose study raises important topics deserving of our attention.

Since my arrival at Westminster in 2011 I have been working to ensure that the school’s existing collections are better understood and displayed. Moreover, through initiatives such as purchasing a piece of pupil artwork each year, we are seeking to make the collection more representative of school life today in its full diversity. Moving forward I am keen to use our Oral History programme to record the

experiences of pupils at Westminster from Black and other minority backgrounds.

Our research is only just beginning. Over the course of 2021 we are posting monthly articles on our blog which allow more space to investigate stories in detail. Subjects thus far include Robert Dalzell, an eighteenth century pupil whose maternal grandmother was a Black slave; the Beckford family who amassed enormous wealth through ownership of enslaved people and plantations in Jamaica; and William Murray whose legal rulings helped pave the way for abolition and who is now known for the care he showed his niece and ward, the mixed-race Dido Elizabeth Belle. To read more please visit [archiveblog.westminster.org.uk](http://archiveblog.westminster.org.uk). Afua Hirsch has remarked that what we need at this time is ‘more history, not less.’

Some elements of the media are keen to portray the decisions facing us as binary – we either retain all of our statues on their pedestals or erase these figures from history. In this way our past becomes a proxy for the current culture war and can distract from much needed institutional change. We must reject this attempt to polarize debate and approach these difficult subjects with the care and subtlety they deserve. ■

### Collections Online

Our electronic catalogue continues to develop and can be browsed and searched at [collections.westminster.org.uk](http://collections.westminster.org.uk). The site contains descriptions – and in some cases digital copies – of works of art, rare books, objects and records. Thanks to time spent working from home over the lockdown we have been able to add biographical information drawn from the first three volumes of The Record of Old Westminsters to the catalogue as well. We appreciate constructive criticism on this resource and are always keen to know which areas of school life you would like to see better represented to help guide future digitisation, transcription and cataloguing.

---

# In Memoriam

The Development Office have been made aware of the deaths of the following members of the Elizabethan Club and greater Westminster School community, since the publication of the last Elizabethan Newsletter.

## 2016

Keith Gordon Allison (RR, 1939-44)

Timothy Julian Bearne (GG, 1976-81)

Isobel Mary Wilson Bowler (BB, 1980-82)

Gervaise Vance Chapman (AHH, 1945-50)

Richard Adrian Vaughan Chitty (AHH, 1960-65)

Lord Roger Chorley (Former Staff)

Robert Sandifer Clarke (BB, 1948-53)

Stephen George Croft (GG, 1946-51)

George Denman (AHH, 1939-43)

Malcolm Graham Cole Evans (BB, 1952-56)

Jonathan Patrick Gambles (GG, 1959-63)

Robert Graeme Hamilton Hinton (AHH, 1958-63)

Frank Henrick Hitchman (WW, 1955-60)

Anthony Charles Bryan Hunter (GG, 1950-55)

Kenneth Lucas Moses Hyam (RR, 1960-64)

Prof. Lawrence Edward Lowe (KS, 1946-51)

David McGee (AHH, 1937-40)

Prof. Peter Scott Noble (AHH, 1954-58)

Christopher Edmund Potts (LL, 1975-79)

David Jessel Turner-Samuels (AHH, 1931-36)

Dr Claire Sheppey (GG, 1984-86)

Robert Douglas Cunninghame Warden (LL, 1938)

Dr Richard John Watts-Tobin (KS, 1946-52)

Those who passed in 2016 listed here were erroneously missed from previous copies of The Elizabethan Newsletter due to the remodel.

## 2017

Catharine Joan Fenton (Former Staff)

## 2018

Benjamin Alex Segal (Former Governor)

## 2019

Adam Peter Hurn (LL, 1965-69)

James George Forrest (AHH, 1957-62)

George Anthony Mitcheson (AHH, 1948-52)

## 2020

David E Brown (Former Staff)

Justin Riveagh Connolly (QS, 1947-51)

Rev'd Michael Frank Douglas Cripps (RR, 1943-46)

Dr Eric John Gavin (WW, 1965-70)

Elizabeth Giles (HH, 1989-90)

Peter Hughes (Former Staff)

John Anthony Land (QS, 1952-57)

Julian Angus Ledingham (LL, 1967-71)

William Ian Keith Maclennan (QS, 1953-59)

Dr Robert Emerson Nagle (GG, 1943-49)

Robert John Dudley Welch (WW, 1961-65)

## 2021

Dr Peter John Orr Claydon (BB, 1956-61)

Hon. Peter W Hall (QS, 1966-67)

John Anthony Peter Hole (WW, 1952-58)

Sir Brian Edward Urquhart (KS, 1932-37)



---

## Tributes



Joan Fenton

### **JOAN FENTON (FORMER STAFF – GRANT'S MATRON 1958-80)**

*d. 15 June 2017*

Catherine Joan Fenton, née Rickman, Matron of Grants 1958-80, passed away surrounded by family on 15 June 2017.

Joan was born in Grantham in 1919 and grew up in Cobham. She was sporty at school, a county champion swimmer and an accomplished artist. During WW2 she joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and served as a meteorologist for bombing missions. After the war, she married Tony and had children Michael, Jane and Frances.

Following her divorce, she joined the staff of Westminster School as Matron of Grants where she was to stay for 22 years (accompanied for much of that time by her cat, Grunty, whom she loved while bemoaning the fact that people seemed to think it gave them a licence to send her all manner of feline-related tat). There she worked with, among others, housemasters John Wilson and Denny Brock, and formed enduring friendships with colleagues Ronald French, Anne Dunn, Gretchen and Geoffrey Shepherd, and Michael Brown to name but a few.

Recollections of Joan's time up Grants from those who knew her then are characterised both by admiration for her approach to pastoral care and by a curiosity borne of the enigmatic air she unwittingly cultivated. She seems to have been happy regularly to conspire with boys to get them out of Station, liberally dispensing chits and on at least one occasion prescribing a pupil with a pint of Guinness for hay fever (one to be taken daily). Following school trips across the Channel, many a tired and emotional Grantite was sent to Joan to be "Sanitised", a refuge from the rougher edges of Westminster life where a full recovery could be effected. She was more confidant than medical professional, with an established intelligence network – little occurred of which she was not aware

– and a neat line in relationship advice. Her evening surgery was very much a social affair, to which the many Old Grantites who have been kind enough to share their memories of her for this piece will testify; on behalf of Joan's family, I thank them for their time and consideration.

Admired and respected by pupils and staff alike, an aura of mystery nonetheless surrounded her. Joan's charges up Grants were struck by her department, "more like a Queen than a nurse", a "distinguished looking lady who was always immaculately turned out". Even within her own family, the details of her early life acquired the patina of myth, such as a childhood trip to Munich when she had to be locked in the loos of a beer hall because a shouty Austrian with a silly moustache was kicking off a riot outside. Or, during the war, cadging a flight from Cornwall to Croydon airport, visiting her mother in Cobham and then blagging another flight back the same evening, all without getting caught. And then during retirement, when she was travelling in Australia and missed her bus stop, ending up lost in the outback – so the story has it – and wandering about the bush like Crocodile Dundee.

One never heard these stories from Joan herself. She was kind and clever and funny, but also quite unsentimental, always self-deprecating and not overly given to nostalgia. At 97, she was still living in her own house, living her own life, doing her crosswords, eating shortbread and sipping the occasional sherry.

At RAF Predannack where she was posted during the war, there's a memorial to the airmen who lost their lives on the bombing missions that Joan worked on. The inscription reads:

"Like a breath of wind gone in a fleeting second, only the memories now remain."

***Written by her grandson Ben Woodhams (BB, 1985-90)***

---

**JAMES (JIM) FORREST (AHH, 1957-62)**

*11 September 1943 – 16 July 2019*

Jim Forrest was a person who everyone should aspire to be. He was immensely modest, as well as being consistently kind and considerate. He was indeed always far more interested in talking about you and other people rather than himself. Generous with his time, Jim combined his teaching career, bringing up an extensive family and his own long-distance running successes, with acting as cross-country secretary of the OW's Athletics Club for nearly 60 years, as well as being a leading official of Ranelagh Harriers in south-west London.

In 1957, Jim entered Westminster, where he excelled in science and in athletics. I well remember trailing home in the Junior Long Distance Race along the Thames to Putney and asking Jim, who was standing at the finish, who had won the event. He looked almost sheepish when he replied: "I did". When he died on July 16, 2019 after an extraordinary seven-month battle in Kingston Hospital against a variety of conditions, it was moments like that in our long friendship that immediately came to mind.

In 1962, he went up to Christ Church to read chemistry on a 'closed' Westminster scholarship. At Oxford, he was a constant presence at the Iffley Road track, where in 1954 Roger Bannister had become the first man to run a mile in under four minutes. Jim became captain of the University cross-country second team.

After graduating from Oxford in 1966, he undertook Voluntary Service Overseas in Lesotho, an experience which made a profound impression on him, giving him a love for the African continent. Returning to London, he worked briefly for BP before realizing that his vocation was teaching. Taking a PGCE at King's College, London, he was appointed to the staff of Raynes Park High School, becoming Head of Science in 1971.

He later moved as Deputy Head to Hollyfield School in Surbiton before taking early retirement to work as an

Ofsted inspector. He combined this with teaching a foundation year chemistry course for overseas students at both Surrey and Kingston Universities, as well as giving private tuition to GCSE and A-Level pupils.

All the time, Jim was extensively involved in running. While in Africa, he had completed the famous Comrades Marathon, 52 miles, which that year was staged uphill. He also finished the London to Brighton event (a double marathon) in 6 hours 17 minutes and set a record time of 11 hours 8 minutes 46 seconds for the South Downs Way, a time which was unbeaten for 13 years. As an official for Ranelagh, he was club captain over a total period of 10 years, edited the club magazine and was a qualified coach, helping many youngsters. Among the people he introduced to the club was Hugh Jones, who subsequently won the London Marathon in 1982.

For the OWW, Jim was the cornerstone of the cross-country team. In 1974, he led us to victory in the annual Inter Old Boys race on Wimbledon Common when he also was first in the individual event, the only OW ever to have achieved this. Later, he was a high-scoring member of the Veterans when the OWW won a series of the age-group classifications against rival old boys' teams. Jim still holds the OWW record for the long-distance Towpath Cup, which may well be never broken as the annual fixture against the School and Common Room has moved to the more convenient location of Hyde Park. Jim was still running regularly until he was over 70.

However, in 2017, he was diagnosed with CBD Cortico Degeneration, a rare condition that causes gradually worsening movement, speech, memory and swallowing. He also suffered regular bouts of aspirated pneumonia, while being treated in Kingston Hospital.

Jim is survived by his children, Neil and Louise, and his second wife Claire and her three children, Sasha, Christopher and Juliette, to all of whom he devoted so much loving care.

*Written by John Goodbody (LL, 1956-61)*

---

**ERIC GAVIN (WW, 1965-70)**

*13 November 1952 – 13 December 2020*

I first met Eric when we were pupils at Westminster School in the 1960s. We were both in Wren's; he was in the year above. We soon became friends, drawn together by a mutual interest in music.

Eric was a great sportsman at school. He excelled in both running and swimming and broke a number of school records in both, possibly still not bettered. One race I recall was the inter-House School relay race with Eric being our last runner for the House. My recollection is that he started about 150 yards behind the lead runner for another House but during the run he made up the ground to win the race. It was absolutely stunning. One pupil, who most definitely was not into sport, was completely blown away by Eric's run. Years later in our 20s, we met David Bedford, the famous long distance runner, in a pub in Hampstead. I made a point of telling him about Eric's running ability and when Eric told him his record timings, David Bedford was genuinely and suitably impressed.

After Westminster, Eric studied dentistry at Guy's Hospital where he had a successful time. While in his final months there, he achieved an American Dental Association Scholarship to study and observe crown and bridge work at the New York City Dental School, returning to Guy's to sit his finals and obtain his BDS dental degree.

He went into a dental practice under the arches in Peckham, just down the road from his home in Kennington. After a few years though, Eric decided to leave London and practise in Colchester. He moved out and went to live in a cottage in Sudbury, Suffolk. I was surprised by this move as he always seemed such a city person. However, Eric loved nature and the cottage had a large expanse of land around it, including a stream running under the wooden veranda he was to build at the back of the cottage.

At the same time as pursuing his dentistry career, he also pursued one in music. He was a singer/song-writer who



---

wrote many good songs and would sign to Atlantic Records and later with Trial Records. He released a single “Poverty Line” which was a collaboration with fellow old Westminster boys, Stephen Lipson (RR, 1967-71) and Malcolm Bowden (RR, 1967-71). He made a number of CDs and recorded other musicians in the studio he built on his land. Eric continued writing songs and recording them as well as performing them. Over the years we spent many happy hours together playing guitars.

Family life came to Eric in the 1990s with his wife Anna and their two children, Joe and Francesca. Eric was always very proud of his children. Joe, a doctor, is himself a very good guitarist and Francesca was the youngest armed Civil Nuclear Officer before joining the RAF where she is now a dog handler serving in the Falklands.

Eric was a great friend. He was someone you could talk to about anything and laugh with about all sorts of things. He had an inquisitive and imaginative mind and was always questioning. It was tragic when, eight years ago at the age of 60, he was diagnosed with early on-set Alzheimer’s. It seemed unbelievable that it could be so. Gradually the disease took more and more of him. He was eventually placed in a care home, where he died last November.

*Written by Chris Hales (WW, 1966-1970)*

---

Thomas Wells Hall. Pete spent his early childhood in Salisbury, CT, and Montclair, NJ, due to his father’s work as an educator. Pete always considered the family’s farm in Shaftsbury, VT, his home, where they spent much of his early years, and moved to permanently when he was 11 years old. He prided himself on being a Vermonter, having deep-rooted ancestral ties to the state; his great-great grandfather, Peter Washburn, served as governor of Vermont in the 1850s. He was the oldest of five children and remained very close with his sisters and brother throughout his life.

Pete graduated from the Hotchkiss School in 1966, and attended Westminster School in London from 1966-67. He then earned his BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Morehead Scholar, where he was president of the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and a brother of Chi Psi. He was honored as a member of the Golden Fleece, the Order of the Grail, and the Order of the Old Well. At UNC, he met his former wife Katherine Romans Hall and they were married in 1971. From 1971 to 1974, he was an Assistant Dean of Students at UNC Chapel Hill, and in 1975 completed a Masters in Student Services. Pete graduated cum laude from Cornell Law School in 1977, and was student president of Cornell’s Legal Aid Clinic in his third year.

After law school, he served as law clerk to Judge Albert Coffrin of the District of Vermont before becoming an Assistant U.S. Attorney, also for the District of Vermont, and soon became First Assistant U.S. Attorney. He and Kathy had three children during this time, Sam in 1979, Susan in 1982, and Elizabeth in 1985. In 1986, Pete left government service to form Reiber, Kenlan, Schwiebert, Hall and Facey P.C. in Rutland.

With his children, friends, and family, he shared his love for the outdoors, canoeing, fishing, pets, gardening and growing food, raising pigs and turkeys, grilling, cooking, and a love and care for all things living, especially our



*Hon. Peter W. Hall*

---

**HONORABLE PETER W. HALL  
(QS, 1966-67)**

*9 November 1948 – 11 March 2021*

Peter Welles Hall of North Chittenden, Vermont, died on March 11, 2021, after a six month battle with cancer. He was 72 years old. A judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit since 2004, Pete was one of the good guys – a cherished father, husband, brother, step-father, and grandfather, an exemplar public servant, a gentleman, a kind and dear friend to many, and a quintessential Vermonter.

Peter (Pete) was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on November 9, 1948, to Emilie Worthen Hall Paine and

---

fellow humans. He taught his children carpentry, home and car maintenance, and how to stack firewood (a particular art). He instilled in them a strong work ethic, a duty to serve one's community, and an approach to life with principle, purpose, and a sense of humour.

Over the years, Pete was active at Trinity Episcopal Church in Rutland, was chair of the Board of the of Rutland Regional Medical Center, served as selectman for the Town of Chittenden, volunteered as a Guardian Ad Litem, and was active on the Rutland County Bar Association and Vermont Bar Association, serving as president of the VBA from 1995-1996.

In 2001, he returned to public service as the U.S. Attorney for the District of Vermont. Following three successful years, he was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by President George W. Bush. He became Vermont's only federal appellate Judge in July 2004. In 2009, Pete and his partner of many years, Maria Dunton, were married in New York City, a second home which he and Maria loved to explore.

Pete served as a delegate of the U.S. Federal Judges Association to the International Association of Judges. As an IAJ-UIM delegate, he traveled the world, working with foreign judiciaries on matters of administration, independence, continuing education, and governmental relations. He took great pride in representing the U.S. in this role and made many friends the world over.

He also served on the Board of Directors for the Vermont Law School and was a guest lecturer there. Dedicated to furthering the next generation of lawyers, Pete loved to mentor his law clerks and interns, as well as many other up-and-coming attorneys. The 60+ law clerks who worked with him on the Court of Appeals now serve in prominent roles in private practice and public service, a particular source of pride for him.

Pete is survived by his wife, Maria Dunton; three children and their partners: Samuel Hall and Phoebe

Brosnan of Chittenden, Susan and Jonathan Firth of Montclair, NJ, and Elizabeth Hall and Nathaniel Cresswell of Portland, ME; three grandchildren: Simon and Otis Firth and Warren Cresswell; two step-children and their partners: Clyde Dunton-Gallagher and Nancy Arguelles of Miami, FL, and Anna Dunton-Gallagher and Jake Brown of Rutland; two step-grandchildren: Mae Dunton-Gallagher and Caleb Brown; four siblings and their partners: Mary Hall, Susan Hall, Margaret Hall and Thomas Pell, and Thomas Hall; two step-siblings: Rebecca Jensen and David Paine; and dozens of loving cousins, nieces, nephews, and life-long friends. He was a true and generous friend to many, and will be loved and missed.

A memorial service will be held in Rutland later this year. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: The Vermont Bar Foundation (Montpelier, VT) and the Yale School of Medicine (New Haven, CT), designated to the Jim McNiff Fund for Kidney Cancer Research.

*Written by Susan Firth and Kathy Hall*

---

#### **PETER HUGHES (FORMER STAFF)**

*d. 5 May 2020*

Popular phrases such as 'living life to the full' or 'making the most of life' may be cliché but they also sum up the life of David Evan Peter Hughes who recently died just after his 88th birthday. He was also an accomplished chemistry teacher who had a very full and successful career holding both head of science and headmaster positions in some of England's top private schools. The tributes from his friends and colleagues show that he was also entertaining and well-liked and his published chemistry school text books, his work for The Cambridge Examination Board and scientific journal articles co-authored with his pupils all attest to his intellect and ability to communicate science.

Peter, as he preferred to be called, was born in 1932 in London to a teetotal father who also had an illustrious career

but in the Civil Service, and Peter accompanied his father to Buckingham Place when he was honoured with an OBE. Peter won a scholarship to St Paul's Boys School, London and from there was awarded a scholarship to study chemistry at St. John's College Oxford. It was there that he met his future wife Iris Jenkins and according to one friend proposed to her at a May Ball he had organised at Trinity College for that very purpose.

As well as studying chemistry, he was a serious and committed Anglican. At university and throughout his career he was keen to reconcile science and religion and he later gave many talks and speeches to both academics and congregations on this topic. He emphasized the beauty and precision of factual science, but added that the moral and spiritual guidance of Christianity is also essential to any philosophy of knowledge.

After graduating from Oxford, national service and marriage to Iris, he took up a teaching post at Shrewsbury School where he remained for 23 years and had a family of three children: Gwyneth, Rosamund and Edmund. He was well-loved by colleagues and his drinks parties were legendary, lively and fun, but never lacking in decorum. He and Iris would offer Sunday lunch to anyone who did not have a meal organized. One colleague said of him: "Your father was a good man, a clever man, a funny man, a big-hearted man and ever kind and humane".

As Head of Science at Shrewsbury, then Second Master he designed and built new laboratories which were much admired. This was an activity he was to repeat with enthusiasm. He also appreciated music and the arts at the school and helped with sporting activities, bridge club and hill walking and there were few new opportunities and interests that he did not embrace. He even found time to become an expert gardener which he applied well in his retirement in Shrewsbury.

He was an ambitious man too and second in command was not quite enough and so he took up a post as



---

Head of St. Peter's School, York where he organized the building of another science block, this time opened by Prince Charles. But a long-term position at the helm was not for him, and he moved back to the chemistry teaching he loved at Westminster School. Once more he put his talents to overseeing the development of new science laboratories, this time open by Her Majesty the Queen. It was this later career move that gave him the most enjoyment. The people he and Iris met and other teachers he mentored became very close friends and some of them were Bridge partners who travelled abroad together. He continued playing Bridge as long as his health allowed him to travel even after retiring back to Shrewsbury aged 79. He was determined to squeeze every drop out of life and his hobbies.

His wife Iris was a lover of history and interested in classical civilization and Peter shared her passion in the many holidays they enjoyed abroad and they visited countries and historic sites which are now inaccessible such as in Yemen and Libya. His spirit of adventure extended to some tough mountain and hill climbing in both Wales and Scotland. Being somewhat reckless and overconfident in his enthusiasm to explore new terrain, he would stride out on his own. Sometimes mountain conditions were dangerous and his friends waited with some concern for him, usually the oldest member of the party, to find his way down the mountain to the rendezvous. He always got there unaided with no concerns and he kept on walking for pleasure into his eighties even as his health deteriorated.

Iris and Peter held double celebrations for both Golden and Diamond Wedding Anniversaries – one in Shrewsbury and one in London – to cater for all relatives, colleagues and friends. These were joyous occasions and he gave his guests personal, and entertaining speeches in which everyone got a mention. His friends and family remember the occasions with fondness and another Royal endorsement – a letter from Her Majesty the Queen congratulating them

on their Diamond Anniversary – is a tribute to their long and happy marriage.

Peter cared for Iris as long as he could when she developed dementia and she felt secure and happy in his presence. Sadly his daughter Rosamund is no longer with us, but he is survived by his wife Iris, daughter Gwyneth and son Edmund. As a father, husband and friend he is much missed.

*Written by his children Gwyneth Hughes and Edmund Hughes*

---

### **ADAM HURN (LL, 1965-69)**

*12 November 1951 – November 2019*

More than 300 people attended the gathering at Askrigg on November 26 to celebrate the life of Adam Hurn where he was remembered for being a wonderful, caring vet with a tremendous appetite for adventure.

The celebration was held at Bainbridge Vets and one participant commented afterwards: "Adam's enthusiasm for life and living came across so powerfully. People's warmth and affection for him, their respect and admiration shone through." Local farmer, William Lambert and his family commented: "Adam was a wonderful vet and friend to the whole farming community and we will miss him dreadfully."

*Nobby Dimon scripted the story of Adam's early life for the celebration and this was enacted by Dan and Amy Cockett.*

Adam was born in London in November 1951. His family moved to Manchester when his father, a TV film director, was involved in the early days of Coronation Street, and Adam was sent to a preparatory school on the South coast. It was there, during his lonely walks, that he became interested in animals. He then attended Westminster School and should have gone on to Cambridge University but was unable to do so due to illness. So instead he hitched lifts to Greece and after a year there gained a place at Liverpool University to study veterinary science.

It was in the university's sports centre that he met Vanda and they were married in September 1975.

Following graduation he first worked with a practice in Liverpool which led to him not only being the vet to Police dogs but also to Knowsley Safari Park. At the latter his jobs included castrating a cross-eyed tiger and lancing very large boils on elephants.

From Liverpool he moved to a mixed practice in Saffron Walden and then a friend from his Westminster School days challenged him to volunteer to work with UNAIS (International Service with the UN). He and Vanda at first declined because they had two young children. But then, in October 1981, they became possibly the first family to volunteer, he as a vet and Vanda as a teacher.

They travelled to a very remote part of Bolivia with their five-year-old and one-year-old daughters, Alice and Daisy, to work with the Guarani Indians. Their new home had no running water nor electricity.

One of Adam's key projects was to show how, with good management, pigs could be bred to make maximum use of soya and maize and so provide an income and food for families. He also developed a simple water filtration scheme to improve the quality and health of villagers. While in Bolivia they adopted their son Marcos.

When they returned to England four years later Adam was looking for another challenge. He had worked as a student in Bainbridge and was happy to accept David Metcalfe's invitation to join the practice in Wensleydale. He served the community as a vet for nearly 30 years and one of his client's commented: "He was a most rare human-being: wise, thoughtful, considerate, compassionate...the list goes on, including the-best-vet-ever!"

Vanda recounted that the most challenging and heart-breaking time for them was during the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. Following that he was interviewed by Adam Henson for the BBC's Countryfile programme about the broad range of vet work in the Dales.

Retirement provided Adam and Vanda an opportunity to travel

throughout South America and to spend over a month back among the Guarani Indians – who now had running water, electricity and even broadband.

At the celebration at Askrigg Adam's insatiable spirit of adventure was also remembered.

His love of windsurfing was described by David West-Watson. "We have travelled to some very windy locations for some 'intense water therapy'. Adam suffered the same bug as me – he loved it when it was extreme – the slight fear and enormous exhilaration," he said.

Adam's insatiable spirit of adventure was also well known in Wensleydale. Will Daykin described the adventures the Wensleydale Mountain Biking group had had thanks to Adam finding "short cuts" by looking at Google maps. "We have an annual Christmas ride down from Tan Hill. Adam's 'extra bit we could do' actually involved a section of rock climbing," Will said.

The others who participated in the celebration included Adam's daughter, Alice Hurn, Helen Appleton, Andrew Fagg, Peter Nettleton, Richard Fawcett, and Dan and Amy Cockett.

Vanda especially thanked the staff at the neurosurgery unit at the James Cook University Hospital and neurosurgeon Mr Varma.

Donations at the celebration are being shared between two Askrigg charities: Low Mill Outdoor Centre of which Adam had been the chair, and Yorebridge Sports and Leisure Centre of which Vanda is the chair.

*Written for richmondshiretoday.co.uk, shared by Michael Jarvis (QS, 1964-69)*

---

#### **ANTHONY LAND (QS, 1952-1957)**

*21 September 1939 – 24 September 2020*

Arriving in 1952 from the Dragon School to take up his place in College, J.A. (Anthony) Land, my father who died in September 2020, seemingly took to Westminster with serene ease and contentment. My childhood was full of his stories of Westminster life. He described a place of intellectual challenge, fun, creative tension, friendships and above all excitement

in the heart of a city recovering from the War and preparing for the Coronation in 1953.

Such was his happiness and pride at attending the School, that for me, there was an inevitability that I would be put down for a place at the Under School and then the Great School, and so it was the case. He was delighted when I eventually attended both Schools, joining Westminster in 1985.

Being elected a Queen's Scholar in 1952, of all years, meant that Anthony and his fellow Scholars were to be participants at the Coronation in 1953, with the responsibility for shouting the famous "Vivats" as Her Majesty processed through the Abbey. His involvement in the Coronation undoubtedly proved to be the highlight of Anthony's time at Westminster, indeed he recounted the story so many times at home that it became something of a family in-joke about which he was gently ribbed as often as possible! He wrote down some memories of the occasion many years later which I paraphrase here.

*"When we arrived in September, preparations for the Coronation soon had an effect; the Abbey was closed wholly from November onwards. The cloister became the builder's yard and site office for works installing more seats, TV camera lighting and the "Theatre" extending the channel where the crowning was to take place.*

*Gradually the 40 Scholars began to learn something of our role in "welcoming the sovereign on behalf of the people at his/her coronation". From Elizabeth I's reign onwards, the scholars would have attended the Coronation any way. It was James II in 1865 who was first greeted by the scholars who "continued to sing 'Viva' – 'long live' – until his Majesty ascended the Theatre".*

*We were measured for our Coronation dress. Based on the scholars' curious hybrid Sunday Best of morning coat and evening butterfly collar and white bow tie, this special outfit had in addition, white waistcoat, black knee breeches and stockings, black patent*





Anthony Land

*silver-buckled shoes and white surplice. We carried white gloves and a mortar board.*

*Queen Victoria noted in 1836, “we should have had a rehearsal”. In 1953, rehearsals were exhaustive. Sitting at the back of St. Margaret’s, we were over-awed and our performance was dreadful. More rehearsals followed and confidence was restored.*

*At 10.15am on June 2, as the Regalia procession began, we saw at close quarters the magnificent St. Edward’s and Imperial Crowns, orb, sceptre and the rest, and joined the procession ourselves. Entering the Abbey from the South Door, it was an awe-inspiringly magnificent multi-coloured scene; peers and peeresses forming a sea of ermine, blue velvet and sparkling coronets. I noticed Winston Churchill on my left.*

*Listening later on 78rpm records, I am struck by the volume we generated in the Vivats, just 40 boys in the rafters of the Abbey. Leaving our lofty position afterwards we were granted a week’s break and the train home from Euston was packed with people who had watched the procession in the rain. My mementoes: a hand-bound copy of the Coronation music, a Medal, an entry ticket for rehearsals, a pair of silver-buckled shoes. I was glad to have been there.*

His immense fondness for the School came out in stories too numerous to recall, of College’s achievement of winning the House Cricket tournament, Classics lessons with his mentor, the legendary Theo Zinn, the vital knack of carrying 6 separate plates of fried eggs in College Hall for fellow boys, and many more. I recall him trying to describe “The Greaze” to me before I went to the Under School and I did wonder what sort of strange place I was getting myself involved in!

In 2019, during the School’s Open House Evening, my father and I visited Westminster on a beautiful sunny evening for one last time together. After visiting my old House Grant’s, we walked up the stairs in College, observing his name on the Board as

Captain of the School for 1957, and then spending time in his Head Boy’s room. I can picture the smile on his face as he looked out of the window and over to Victoria Tower. Sadly, by this stage dementia was setting in, but he never forgot his schooldays and it was clear that those few hours we spent in Little Dean’s Yard were very special for him.

After Westminster he spent a year teaching at Rugby School with John Carleton, latterly of Westminster teaching staff. He read Classics at Trinity College, Cambridge before a varied career in a variety of managerial roles and in a variety of places; The Times, Readers Digest, Consumers Association, Design Council and a number of health industry consultancies. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Sussex. After Cambridge and for most of the rest of his life he lived in west London, marrying Deborah Murdoch in 1967 and raising me and my sister Jocelyn. Born in Uttoxeter and with parents from Staffordshire and Derbyshire, arriving at Westminster was his first extended stay in London. He became and stayed a Londoner, testimony to his love for and pride in attending Westminster School.

***Written by his son Francis Land (GG, 1985-1990)***

---

**JULIAN LEDINGHAM (LL, 1967-71)**

*15 June 1953 – September 2020*

Julian and I first met when we were aged about 7 at our primary school (Arnold House School in St. John’s Wood). We remained friends for life. After primary school, we both went to Westminster School. This was in the mid-1960s. Julian was a weekly boarder in Liddell’s House. He got well into the life of the school and, of course, life outside its doorstep. He became Head Boy of his House and Princeps Oppidanorum (Head of the Town Boys (not scholars)), the second most senior pupil in the school.

After Westminster, Julian read Latin American studies at university. Julian

was always very good at languages, particularly Spanish. The course also offered a year in Mexico which Julian thoroughly enjoyed and made good use of.

We would meet up frequently in the holidays between university terms and after. These were some of the best days. In 1972 Julian and I and our mutual Westminster School friend, Eric Gavin, spent a glorious two weeks in the Lake District staying in a wooden cottage near a river in Little Langdale. It was still the time of flower power and we enjoyed our time there. It felt an extremely free time for us all. The water supply came from the garden and could also be drunk straight from the streams in the hills.

Julian joined the British Council after University and ran student courses for the Council, which were often up in Leeds where he increasingly spent time. He played football in the British Council football team on Saturdays when he could and the team went on to win a West London Amateur League cup one year. He was very happy at the Council but decided to leave after many years. He did a variety of things afterwards and later set up Le Tea Cosy café in Primrose Hill, which quickly became a very popular destination for locals and others, not least no doubt due to Julian's warm and welcoming personality.

He bought a flat in Cannes and began to spend a lot of his time there. It was during his time there that he met his future wife, Julie. They met on the plane going back to the UK and from that beginning Julie would become the love of his life. They continued to spend much of their time in Cannes where Julie had a business.

Julian was a strong and positive person and always engaging and uplifting to be with. In Cannes, he had a scooter and both he and Julie would drive round the local area on it or in his car, finding good places to visit. He and Julie enjoyed their life in Cannes. It was very sad that in this period of happiness he developed the cancer that would eventually lead to his death.

He confronted that terrible challenge with the same forthright and positive approach he had applied throughout his life. He was a fighter and kept positive at the hardest of times and right to the end.

*Written by Chris Hales (WW, 1966-1970)*



*Photograph courtesy of Ronald Turnbull*

**WILLIAM IAN KEITH MACLENNAN (QS, 1953-59)**

*17 September 1940 – 24 March 2020*

Keith MacLennan died in Carlisle Infirmary on 24 March 2020. Aged 79, he had been for many years a prominent member of the Carlisle musical world. Retiring to Brampton in 2001 after a distinguished teaching career at Rugby School, he quickly threw himself into cathedral life, initially as a lay clerk under the then Master of Music Jeremy Suter. He became Chairman of the Abbey Singers; and he was also an enthusiastic member of the Wordsworth Singers chamber choir. Although a natural baritone, he cheerfully responded to the shortage of tenors in the cathedral choir (though he was later allowed to revert to bass). This readiness to help out was typical of Keith, both in music and beyond. Tributes speak repeatedly of his kindness and generosity, patience and wisdom. Jeremy Suter talks of 'his enormous energy in fostering a good team spirit amongst his fellow singers by seizing any opportunity to offer words of praise and encouragement'.

For all of us friends and family he was simply 'a lovely man'.

Keith was unduly modest about his musical talents. These ranged widely, moving easily from Tudor polyphony to popular song. Not far below the surface of a solemn cassocked figure, there lurked a quirky, impish sense of humour. Few who were there will have forgotten his bravura performance in a Carlisle Festival of Tom Lehrer and Noel Coward numbers, the latter delivered in his inimitably posh voice. Perfect.

Keith was born in Ottawa to Sir Ian, a career diplomat, and Margherita (Peggy) MacLennan (née Jarratt). Educated at Westminster School, where he was a Queen's Scholar, he went on to read Classics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After a year spent teaching in India he joined Rugby School, where he remained for the whole of his professional career. He ran the Classics department, was housemaster of Sherriff House, played his French horn, sang in the chapel choir, and generally involved himself in the life of the school. A brilliant linguist, described as 'a formidable and resourceful scholar', and 'the best scholar of his generation working as a schoolmaster', he was also a gifted interpreter of the Greco-Roman world: a life-work continued after his retirement through his edited volumes of the Latin writers Virgil and Plautus. A former pupil (later a professor of Classics) says, 'It was under his care that I ceased to long to be Ambassador to Moscow and wanted nothing other than to be a scholar'.

From the early 1970s up to his death he was a key tutor at a successful annual summer school that teaches Greek to sixth formers whose schools do not offer the subject. He served successively as its director of studies, overall director (of 300 students), and chair of its management committee; and (of course) acted in staff plays and conducted the student orchestra.

Keith's love of walking dates back to the family's happy childhood holidays in Cumbria: a long-standing love affair which affected his decision to settle here in retirement. He was proud of his



---

connexion with the Scottish explorer Joseph Thomson, his great-great-uncle, and was a co-founder of the family Trust devoted to his memory. Somewhat willowy in stature, he was not outwardly tough. Nevertheless, at the age of 61 he joined a friend on an epic trek from Thomson's Dumfriesshire birthplace to Edinburgh, a distance of some 70 miles, completed in just under 24 hours.

Keith was an early victim of COVID-19, leaving his family and friends stunned: first, by the suddenness of his passing and then by the sad death, the next day, of his companion of several years, Janet Fielden. He is deeply mourned by his friends, his former colleagues, by those many young and formerly-young people whose lives he influenced, and by the close and loving family to whom he was so devoted.

*Written for the Carlisle News, shared by John Prag (QS, 1954-59)*

---

**ROBERT E NAGLE (GG, 1943-49)**

*28 November 1930 – 26 December 2020*

Dad considered his time at Westminster to be a pivotal period of his life where he learnt a lot and widened his horizons. He joined the School while it was evacuated in Bromyard and was placed in the same dormitory as Francis and David Almond. They became good friends, particularly David, and years later he met their sister Susan whom he married in 1956.

He studied medicine at Trinity College Cambridge and University College Hospital London. After National Service in the RAF and spells in London and Sheffield, he was appointed as a Consultant Cardiologist in south Birmingham and worked there until his retirement in the 1990's. He continued living in Birmingham until his death in December 2020. He is survived by his wife Susan, six children and six grandchildren.

*Written by his daughter Kathy Nagle*

---

**SIR BRIAN URQUHART (KS, 1932-37)**

*28 February 1919 – 2 January 2021*

Sir Brian Urquhart, who has died aged

101, was best known as the principal architect of the United Nations' peacekeeping activities. He was present at the birth of the UN and worked there continuously at senior level for four decades, securing a reputation as the leading authority on the organisation.

Urquhart took part in the UN's foundation in 1945, having joined the preparatory commission in London that drew up the UN charter, as an assistant to Sir Gladwyn Jebb, its executive secretary. Rather than entering the British diplomatic service, Urquhart opted to become an international civil servant in the emerging UN secretariat, wishing to give it his undivided loyalty.

When the UN's first secretary general, Trygve Lie, set up shop in New York in 1946, Urquhart went with him as his personal assistant. For the next 40 years, Urquhart worked closely with succeeding secretaries general, rising to become under secretary general for special political affairs in 1974. In that capacity, he often dealt at first hand with the UN's diplomatic efforts and peacekeeping operations to end conflict in crisis-ridden areas, including the Congo, Cyprus, the Middle East, Angola and Namibia.

During a lifetime of service in the political section of the UN secretariat, he never wavered from his faith in the UN and his belief that in the search for conflict resolution there was no alternative to "collective internationalism". He also recognised the UN's shortcomings and often spoke out as one of its sternest critics. Nor did he temper his strictures on the lack of support for the world body from some of its leading members.

The son of Bertha (nee Rendall) and Murray Urquhart, he was born in Bridport, Dorset, and was brought up by his mother after his parents' marriage broke up. Brian's education began as the only boy among the 200 girls at Badminton school for girls in Bristol, where his mother had become a teacher. Afterwards the public school system took over: Urquhart won a scholarship to Westminster and went on to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1937.

---

He enlisted in the British army on the day the second world war was declared and saw service in Algeria, Tunisia and Sicily. In 1945, he was the first allied officer to enter the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

War, Urquhart said, taught him many lessons that he took with him to the UN. Violence only breeds more violence. Peacekeeping, he thought, “must not rely on military methods to gain objectives and must regard the operation as fundamentally political rather than military”. He was radically opposed to defeatist thinking: “In the UN, a vast and extremely difficult enterprise, it is, in my view, out of the question to contemplate failure. The organisation simply has to be made to work. The probable alternative is not to be contemplated.”

Urquhart served under five very different UN secretaries general: Lie (1946-52), Dag Hammarskjöld (1953-61), U Thant (1961-71), Kurt Waldheim (1972-81) and Javier Pérez de Cuellar (1982-91). He was outraged when it came out after the end of Waldheim’s term that he had lied about his wartime activities, and accused Waldheim of having caused “immense damage not only to his country but to the UN”.

During the Hammarskjöld period, Urquhart had a key role as chief assistant to the assistant secretary general Ralph Bunche. Though they often worked a 17-hour day, it was “by far the most rewarding experience” of his life. Together they launched peacekeeping operations as a central responsibility of the UN, even though its charter had contained no reference to such activity.

Urquhart had foreshadowed peacekeeping in a paper he wrote in 1944, in which he suggested using soldiers to preserve peace rather than wage war. But it was only when Bunche was hammering out the Arab-Israeli armistice agreement of 1949 that they understood the role that peacekeeping could play in creating such an accord.

UN peacekeeping troops were first used in 1956, after the Suez invasion, when they helped to get British, French

and Israeli forces out of Egyptian territory. The UN Emergency Force (UNEF) needed some mark to highlight their neutral presence, and settled on blue, the UN’s colour: since then, the phrase “blue berets” has become synonymous with UN peacekeepers.

Initially Urquhart saw them as lightly armed soldiers to aid the conciliation process, without direct military involvement.

But such a low-key approach could hardly be sustained for long. The first challenge came in the Congo in 1960. The country’s newly won independence was threatened by the secession of Katanga, by chaos, and by civil war. The UN assembled a 20,000-strong force to try to bring order.

Urquhart went out to supervise the operation and accepted that the blue berets had to adopt a far more activist role than he had envisaged for peacekeepers, if the Congo’s territorial integrity was to be preserved. A few weeks after the fatal crash of Hammarskjöld’s plane in 1961, Urquhart was seized and beaten up by Katangese soldiers and had to be rescued by Gurkha troops under the UN command.

With each succeeding crisis, Urquhart learned more and more clearly that effective peacekeeping required a fundamental overhaul of the UN and its key organs, including the security council. He also became preoccupied by the fine line between the safeguarding of national sovereignty and intervention in defence of human rights. Increasingly too, the question had to be answered as to whether UN peacekeepers should engage in “nation building” in the wake of conflict. Urquhart never lost his idealism and his conviction that the UN would remain an irreplaceable tool of international relations.

On his retirement in 1986, Urquhart was knighted. He chose to remain in the US where, for over a decade, he was a scholar-in-residence at the International Programme of the Ford Foundation, and became a prolific writer of articles and book reviews about all aspects of the UN. His deep, but sharply critical and always

constructive, approach was best revealed in his autobiography, *A Life in Peace and War* (1987).

Among other books, Urquhart published a biography of Hammarskjöld in 1972 and Ralph Bunche: An American Life (1993), about his former colleague.

Urquhart is survived by his second wife, Sidney (nee Howard), whom he married in 1963, and their son and daughter; by two sons and a daughter from his first marriage, to Alfreda (née Huntingdon), which ended in divorce; and by 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

*Written for and published in The Guardian and shared by David Roy (AHH, 1955-61)*

---

## **ROBERT WELCH (WW, 1961-65)**

*19 June 1947 – July 2020*

Robert was a kind, gentle and courageous man and showed these qualities all through his life. Born in Cheshire, the middle of three boys, he soon moved to Tangiers in Morocco where his father set up an import/export business. Schooling meant going to the local French school although he knew no French, but that was no problem to Robert, and by 6 or 7 his teachers were complaining he was too chatty in the classroom.

Tangiers was followed by a year in Geneva where French schooling meant learning the decimal system, and skiing on Wednesdays was part of the curriculum. But this part of his life was drawing to a close as he returned to London to prepare for the Westminster entrance exam. It was to prove a challenge as, of course, he had never written an essay in English or indeed dealt in fractions. But Robert overcame this and thrived at Westminster. He played for the Cricket First XI Up Fields and won a place at Brasenose, Oxford to read PPE, helped by both luck and flair. A broken arm at the crucial moment prevented him sitting the entrance exams, so he got through the kind recommendation of a Westminster master and a viva devoted to discussing the gold standard, the favourite topic of





Robert Welch



The bench presented to the School by Robert's widow Virginia. It reads In memory of Robert Welch (1947-2020) an Old Westminster who loved cricket

the don who was to interview him! Robert used the opportunity to take up the modern pentathlon, represented the University, and used his French to arrange a team match in France.

On graduation, Robert was to show his courage again when, instead of becoming an employee, he set up his own company dealing in medical products, leading eventually to his invention of a specialized 'alternating air mattress' that was to sell worldwide. This obviated the need for the elderly having to be turned over regularly in bed in order to avoid developing bed sores which often proved fatal. This led to the nurses in Robert's final days commenting on the qualities of the wonderful mattress on which Robert was lying. 'Yes', said Robert, 'and I Invented it'.

Robert was his own man. This showed itself on his engagement to Virginia. He proposed, not over a candlelit dinner or a weekend away somewhere, but on the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro with the honeymoon being spent trekking across a part of the Venezuelan highlands known as the Lost World and then in the Ecuadorian jungle where a week was spent in a log cabin on a raft in the flooded forest of the Amazon.

He was an enthusiastic cricketer all year round playing for the OWWCC, the Butterflies, whose cap he always wore with aplomb, and the Stragglers of Asia. Called 'The Croucher' because of his peculiar stance at the crease, he had the ability to put back full tosses and rank bad balls, then suddenly, out of nowhere, he would unleash a fusillade of shots of the highest order leaving all those watching to wonder why he had waited so long to show us his talent. Robert loved batting, that was obvious. Indeed, when winter drove us indoors, he seemed just as happy with his weekly net at the Lord's Indoor School. Maybe that was because he didn't have to field – a part of the game he never seemed to fully embrace – which was curious for a man who at Oxford had showed such a gift for the modern pentathlon. He even

played for Middlesex 2nd XI. The name R.J.D. Welch can be seen in Wisden nestling with Test cricketers such as Gattings, Emburey, Radley, Barlow and Titmus.

He enjoyed a very happy family life in London and Suffolk where he and Virginia were wonderful hosts. Their three children are lucky to have inherited many of Robert's qualities including kindness, business acumen and cricketing skills.

*Written by Nick Brown (RR, 1968-73) with grateful thanks to Tim Verity [Old Wykehamist] and Charles Colvile (LL, 1969-71)*



Mikey Wilson

**MICHAEL TERENCE (MIKEY) WILSON (BB, 1966-70)**

9 October 1952 – 28 April 2020  
Muqaddam Michael Terence (Mikey) Wilson died peacefully in AFH Al Khoud at 0500 on 28 April 2020, from medical complications he had been suffering for some time.

Mikey was born on 9 October 1952 in Nigeria, where his father was on Diplomatic Service. He was educated at Westminster School and Queens University Belfast and went on to RMA Sandhurst, and was commissioned into the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1972, serving in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. It was here he developed a penchant for all things Scottish, learning to play the Bagpipes, a skill he developed over the years becoming a

---

very highly qualified piper. It was also at this stage that his liking for a “wee dram” was fostered.

Following his service in the British Army, he joined SAF on 3 February 1976, and although the war was officially over, there was considerable mopping up over the next few years, and Mikey saw active service in Dhofar with NFR. He spent a year at Sarfait, shortly after joining, and was determined to learn Arabic whilst there. He did so brilliantly, becoming a fluent arabist, and went on in later years to get an MA in Arabic and become an Arabic Language Examiner. Not only could he converse well in Classical Arabic, but his mastery of the colloquial tongue made him very popular with the jundeeds. Whilst at Sarfait, he also became friendly with the Iranian Air Defence Detachment and learnt a bit of Farsi as well. He was a natural linguist.

Following his tour with NFR, because of his Arabic skills, he was posted to SAFTR as an Instructor in the Officer Training Wing, where he excelled and was promoted Raaid whilst there.

His next move in the early 1980's was to JR at Nizwa as 2IC. He developed an excellent working relationship with the CO (Khamis bin Humaid Al Kilbani – later COSSAF). So much so that when the CO was promoted Aqeed and sent to command Firqat Forces, he demanded that Mikey come with him and be appointed CO ORF. Mikey was posted to ORF in 1984, but unfortunately prior to his arrival the CO's post had been Omanised and he was appointed 2IC instead.

From ORF he returned to SAFTR as Chief Instructor in 1987 and stayed there six years improving the Recruit Training and running the RCB's as well as introducing the Young Officers Weapons Course. His first marriage was dissolved during this period and he married Jan in 1992.

In 1993, he was posted to HQ 23 Infantry Brigade as SO2 Training and ran the Brigade Exercise that year in preparation for the large scale army Exercise Fajr 23 at the end of that year. In 1995, because of an ongoing back

problem, he was moved to a less active appointment, initially as Finance Officer in the Office of the Senior British Loan Service Officer, SBLSO, and then on his promotion to Muqaddam, as MA to the SBLSO. He was awarded the Sultans Commendation Medal in 1997.

He was granted Omani Citizenship in the mid 2000's and eventually retired from SAF in 2009. By this time he was by some distance the longest serving contract officer in SAF. He and Jan built themselves a large Moroccan Style house in Al Khoud for their retirement, and Mikey undertook a few consultancies.

Mikey was a consummate raconteur with a sharp eye for the ridiculous and absurd. He also had a particularly high regard for HM Sultan Qaboos. On the death of Sultan Qaboos in January 2020 Mikey shared with some of us a number of stories about the Sultan:

“HM was always a great lover of music. When he was a young man staying in Norfolk he passed a church and for the first time heard an organ being played. He was entranced. The bewildered vicar started to hear the sounds of a strange Omani boy in the church ‘having a go.’ Sadly the vicar thereafter locked the church. But later HM bought his own organ, brought in a young man from the Royal College of Music to teach him. And HM later played for the King of Jordan and his wife.

At one point it was decided that the musician in question was under employed and he was told to write military marches for the army. I was asked to help with bagpipe music. I was at Rostaq at the time. For a treat I invited him for lunch and let him fire 400 rounds of GPMG on the range. It mucked up his hearing for a fortnight.”

“When MAM camp opened, there were no Garrison troops, so regiments were required to provide two platoons on rotation.

At a time when it was NFR's turn, I was sent north from Salalah because there was a great deal of theft of .303 ammo going on. This coincided with a visit by HM. Our lads were paraded for

his inspection in their best green boots (Who on earth chose those?)

The formation included a chap with a GPMG. HM immediately asked why his number 2 was on his right, and not on the side where he would be serving the weapon in action. He had a very keen eye for such things. And I saw many examples of it.

Anyway, I inspected the wire that protected the ammo, identified a few weak points, and spent a few long boring nights in ambush with the lads waiting to catch the thieves.

Silly boy that I was! The NFR guards had been nicking it all the time.”

“HM once visited us at Nizwa and visited the donkey lines, and their Central Casting handlers of white bearded Santa Clauses.

HM used to personally name all the considerable number of horses in his stables.

“Do these animals have names?” he enquired of the Donkey Platoon boss.

“Yes, your Majesty.”

“What is this one called?”

“Downkee.”

Those were the days.”

Mike is survived by his wife Jan, his son Laurie and two daughters Ella and Jessica from his first marriage to Christine and his other son Toby. His funeral took place at the Christian cemetery in Mina al Fahal (PDO) on Thursday 7th May 2020 with a restricted group of mourners from both the Omani and British communities in Oman including a lament from a piper.

He will be remembered as being a superb arabist, poet and bagpiper. Examples of his bagpipe playing can be seen by clicking this link. He was a popular and respected officer with both Omanis and expatriates alike. He will be sadly missed.

*Written for <https://www.oman.org.uk/post/mikey-wilson> and shared by Nicholas Harling (GG, 1960-65) and Mikey's widow Jan*







