

WOODBIDGE SCHOOL

OLD WOODBRIDGIAN MAGAZINE 2025



IN THIS ISSUE:
WONDERFUL WOODBRIDGIAN WOMEN
CELEBRATING ADAM HUNT
OWS WHO SERVE

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FROM THE HEAD

This year a friend, colleague and brilliant teacher, Adam Hunt, died after a long battle with cancer. I thought that I had seen courage in action before but have had to redefine what it means to me in light of seeing how Adam responded to his diagnosis, and how he chose to treasure his remaining time. At his memorial, which was held on one of the first days of spring in March, I spoke about the lasting legacy that Adam had left to our school – a true gift. I was also blown away by how many people wanted to celebrate Adam’s life in our beloved chapel and the palpable power of friendship.

This feeling of friendship and coming together was also in evidence at the start of the academic year when the School celebrated Fifty Years of Girls. Studies show that being around people, and feeling that connection, releases oxytocin, one of the most powerful and life affirming hormones in our body. I was most fortunate indeed to be part of this and delighted to see so many Wonderful Woodbridgian Women from across the School’s history of co-education, talking about their divergent experiences of how Woodbridge has shaped them. It is through this network that we have really started to develop our Careers provision. Every half term, Old Woodbridgians who left us within the last ten years have returned to talk to current students about their experiences, the memories they have taken from their time at Woodbridge, and aspects and areas that have really shaped them, helped them and motivated them to experience all that the world throws at them. Indeed, it was an OW who wrote in The Daily Telegraph about her personal experiences when Woodbridge was crowned ‘happiest place to live in Great Britain’ by RightMove. And having visited hundreds of towns all over the country what was the one factor that was the determining one? Community. Need I say more?

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Shona Norman'.

Shona Norman



FROM THE HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE OWs



Stephen and Jane Cole



Stephen and Jane at the Class of 2005 20 Year Reunion July 2025

Welcome to another edition of the Old Woodbridgian Magazine. And many congratulations to Sam James, the School's Alumni Officer, for yet again drawing so many stories together.

It has been a delight this year to have come across former pupils in unexpected places. Just this month alone; in deepest France, at the summer exhibition at the Royal Academy, or at church to hear their banns of marriage. All have warm memories of School. Careers have blossomed, friendships have ripened. And, without exception, and reassuringly, they speak with concern of those for whom life has not been kind.

Equally it has been a privilege to attend formal events at School, especially those such as Inspection or Speech Day when Old Woodbridgians are central. All of us who are former pupils or staff can only be proud of the continued success of the School. Despite immense political and financial challenges, Woodbridge continues to thrive: steered so effectively by Shona Norman and Clive Schlee, but shaped by the cultural approach of decades of former pupils. And of which this magazine can give only a taste.

With warmest best wishes to you all, from us both

Stephen and Jane Cole

FIFTY YEARS OF GIRLS

A CELEBRATION OF WONDERFUL WOODBRIDGIAN WOMEN

Friday 13th – a good date for an OW event? ABSOLUTELY!!

Referred to as a “gymslip invasion” by the local press, Woodbridge School introduced girls in 1974, amongst the first independent schools in the county to become co-educational. Two Anglian television channels picked up the story and it remained newspaper fodder for some time; such was the furore at an all-male establishment deciding to change.

Fifty years later we felt this occasion had to be marked and mark it we did! An OW event which will be hard to beat. It was everything I wanted it to be and more. Everything came together perfectly and it was a complete joy from start to finish to work on this celebration. Shona and I agree it is the highlight of this OW year.

We invited all the first female pupils who crossed the threshold in 1974: 16 First Formers and 25 Sixth Formers; the first Abbey girls from 1979; everyone who has ever been Head Girl or Deputy Head Girl; staff who were teaching at Woodbridge in 1974 and other notable women who have played an important role in the Woodbridge School story. I have never seen so much hugging at an OW event and have genuinely never enjoyed an OW event more.

We began with coffee and a welcome from Shona in the Tuckwell Room, with laughter



East Anglian Daily Times: 17/09/1974

and friendship setting the tone for the day. I had met some of our guests before but for others it was the first time they had returned. Some were nervous about coming but these feelings quickly faded away. Then it was on to the Dome for a whole school assembly where Shona spoke incredibly powerfully about how

things have changed for women in the last fifty years. It's too long to print here, but I urge you to read it.

Scan the QR code to read Shona's assembly speech





Press shot from 1974

*I came away with a heart
full of great memories;
new and old.*

Hannah Steele née Mayhew

Following assembly, our Heads of School, who you will meet later in this magazine, took our guests on tours of the school before we came together in School Hall for lunch. I have to take my hat off to our kitchen team – catering for an event like this is no mean feat but to have done so on a school day when they were literally feeding the 500 too was incredible!

Moving on to the Chapel for a beautiful Service of Thanksgiving led by our School Chaplain, Ian Wilson, with the address given by

Stephen Cole and I was delighted to have been able to persuade former Director of Music John Penny out of retirement to play the organ for us. Equally special was that OW Dide Siemmond composed a piece of music, *Pillars*, in commemoration for this event, which was performed by a trio of two very talented students and one very talented OW.

The day was rounded off with drinks in the sunshine on Chapel Lawn, a perfect end to a perfect day.

I was delighted that so many Wonderful Woodbridgian Women (and some marvelous men) from across our history of co-education were able to be with us. Every single person who attended has been shaped by the school and has in turn helped shape the school into the success it is today.

Given half a chance I will talk endlessly about OW connections. A lot is said about the strength of the Woodbridgian community but there is a reason for that. It is incredibly strong, and incredibly supportive. Everyone who came to this celebration is part of this wonderful community. All of them have more than one OW connection. Many of the first girls were, as Mark Mitchels reminded me, siblings or daughters of OWs. Eighteen of our guests became Woodbridge School parents and we hope some become Woodbridge School parents. Four have returned as members of staff. Some are aunts to current and former pupils. Two have been President of the OWs. One is a widow, mother and grandmother of OWs. Two are married to OWs. My point is that connections to Woodbridge are strong and important and never one-dimensional.

*I was a bit concerned at first
that I would be a bit of a
'spare part' but soon began
to feel at home thanks to
the warm hospitality. It was
a pleasure to meet ex pupils,
old colleagues and some of
your delightful present pupils.*

Doug Maude



Clockwise from back left: Doug Maude, Jill Lubbock, Sarah Rafferty, Deirdre Williams, Susan Gadbsy, Susan Thomas, Mark Mitchels, Elizabeth Mitchels



FIFTY YEARS OF GIRLS

I'd like to touch on some of the Woodbridgian women who couldn't be with us. Some had work commitments that just couldn't be broken. Distance was a factor (to come from Australia or America is probably asking a little too much). The perennial problem of childcare – with thanks to the Grannies who stepped in so some OWs could attend. Those Grannies are Wonderful Woodbridgian Women too!

Vivienne Liley, was our very first Head Girl from 1981/82. When Vivienne was Head of School she was just that. She was flying solo and had beaten her male counterparts to the role. Vivienne has lived in Spain for many years and couldn't attend, much to her disappointment. The surname Liley will be recognisable to many of you. Vivienne is the daughter of Mary Liley who was crucial to the development of the life of girls at Woodbridge. For over sixteen years Mary was instrumental in widening the opportunities for girls, particularly on the sports field and within the CCF.

Thank you so much for including Mum and me in the 'Wonderful Woodbridgian Women' celebration. It was lovely to catch up after so many years with former staff and old school friends. I can't believe it's 50 years this September that I started at Woodbridge School and I feel blessed that I'm still very close to 5 Wonderful Woodbridgian Women from my year group.

Sarah Rafferty née Lubbock



Some of the first Sixth Form Girls from 1974. L-R: Nikola Sly, Sally Robinson, Linda Ryan, Carol Lockett, Sue McGeever, Anita Andrews

I had such a great time, meeting up with old friends and making new ones. What a wonderful community we are!

Pippa Lewis



I absolutely loved the celebration, and it was a fantastic day. It was so lovely to reconnect with women who had been in the years above and below me at Woodbridge. I really enjoyed catching up with some of my old teachers, especially Miss Norman and Mr Cole – I can't believe 17 years have passed since I left!

Lucy Havard



It was such an amazing celebration, and I was so lucky to be a part of it.

Rose McBride

The first Abbey girls were probably expecting 'Number One' to have been with us. Number One was so named by Tom Dewar as she was the very first female pupil to walk through the doors of the Abbey in September 1979. Number One is Jenny Ellis (née Guthrie, mother-in-law to our fantastic pastry chef Chelsea – another lovely OW connection!). Jenny very much wanted to attend but couldn't as she is a wedding celebrant and was conducting two weddings on the day of our

event. Rather wonderfully one of these weddings was of two OWs who became sweethearts when they were Woodbridge pupils; Harry Newton and Alex Ashurst. Alex, as a former Head Girl, was invited to our celebration but was a little busy getting married. We raised a glass to the happy couple.

My list of thank yous for this event is long. Suffice it to say thank you to **everyone** who played a part in bringing together this wonderful celebration of the very best of Woodbridge.

Sam James

GUESTS

OWs

- Anita Andrews (1974-1976)
- Katie Barley (1990-2001)
- Mary-Anne Bartlett (1979-1987)
- Emma Brierly (1979-1987)
- Maddyson Chan (2011-2016)
- Georgie Chapman-Ross (1999-2012)
- Lakisha Charema (2015-2022)
- Tricia Figgis (1979-1988)
- Victoria Finch (1989-1998)
- Annie Fitzgerald (1987-1989)
- Susan Gadsby (1974-1980)
- Jennifer Garnett (1978-1985)
- Sophie Harper (2015-2021)
- Lucy Havard (1999-2007)
- Chloé Hembry (2000-2014)
- Jennifer Humphreys (1985-1995)
- Bee Kemball DL (1979-1989)
- Pippa Lewis (1979-1988)
- Carol Lockett (1974-1976)
- Sue McGeever (1974-1976)
- Wendy McNally (1980-1989)
- Coco Newton (2005-2014)
- Laura Pennie (1997-2004)
- Sarah Rafferty (1975-1982)
- Sally Robinson (1974-1976)
- Sinead Rudland (1995-2009)
- Linda Ryan (1974-1976)
- Dide Siemmond (1999-2006)
- Nikola Sly (1974-1976)
- Hannah Steele (1999-2006)
- Susan Thomas (1974-1981)
- Zach Toppin (1998-2005)
- Isobel Tyndale-Brown (1979-1986)
- Karen Virr (1985-1993)
- Deirdre Williams (1974-1981)
- Alice Youngman (2001-2008)

Former Staff

- Stephen Cole
- Jane Cole
- Jill Lubbock
- Douglas Maude
- Mark Mitchels
- Elizabeth Mitchels
- John Penny
- Cynthia Robinson
- Chris Tyndale-Biscoe
- Dot Tyndale-Biscoe

In Attendance

- Margaret Harper
- James Hattan
- Sam James
- Nicola Mitchell
- Rose McBride
- Shona Norman
- Georgie Phillips
- Ian Wilson
- Trish Wilson



The annual round-up of notable happenings in the lives of OWs

As we've already seen **Alex Ashurst** (2002–2011) was unable to attend our Fifty Years of Girls celebration on 13 September as she was at Shire Hall marrying **Harry Newton** (1997–2011). The most recent in a long line of 'double OW' weddings with many OWs in attendance. Jane Hallett and Lara Garrett were bridesmaids and Harry Golding, Zac Hembry, Ricky Burrows and Fred Newton were groomsmen.



October might seem a strange choice of month for a wedding, after all it isn't known for terribly clement weather, but **Abi Dolan** (2013–2015) had a beautiful ceremony at Suffolk Barn in Bury St Edmunds. Stunning Suffolk autumnal skies make for atmospheric pictures. Abi and her new husband Matt Hayes were joined by many OW friends and their partners and families, including **Ella Carter** and **Kathryn Clements** (bridesmaids – pictured) and Harry Salter, Fraser McKee, Will Farthing, Jacob Dolan (the bride's brother) and Tom Pemberton.



What a wonderful representation of the enduring friendships formed at Woodbridge, three 2011 leavers and their babies. L-R: **Louise Goodall** with Fenna, **Verity Blyth** with Poppy, **Freya Webb** with Leo

One Cockpit, Two Pilots, Two OWs, Two Ex-Boarders, Two Heads of School House

In early September there was a chance meeting of two OWs, namely **Hon Wah Liu** and **James Cleland-Smith** (1990–1996), who have both gone on to become airline pilots. Hon contacted us with this message:



"I was a student at Woodbridge from 2008 to 2014. Since then, I pursued higher education and attended Flight School, eventually joining easyJet as a First Officer. Before I started at easyJet, Stephen Cottrell, former Head of Physics, and Jacky Gill, Head of Geography, mentioned that I should introduce myself to Captain James Cleland-Smith if I ever had the chance, as he was also a former Woodbridge student. James is now a training Captain, with a busy schedule full of duties in the simulator centre and training new cadet pilots, making it difficult to coordinate a flight together.

However, after two and a half years at easyJet, I finally had the pleasure of meeting him during an aircraft turnaround crew change. Although James left Woodbridge in 1996, when I was less than a year old, we found we had so much to talk about, and it was a great moment of connection."

In November our CCF contingent, along with many of members of the Woodbridge community, gathered beside the war memorial to give thanks to those from our School who had given their lives so that we can enjoy the freedom that we have today. Our chaplain, Ian Wilson, led the Act of Remembrance and we were honoured to welcome **Captain Phoebe Cook** (2005–2016) who laid the wreath on behalf of the OWs.



Christmas was celebrated with our traditional carol services at St Mary's Church in Woodbridge. My thanks to the three OWs, **Ken Bailey** (1956–1963), **Vanessa Cartwright** (1980–1985) and **Ed Longhurst-Pierce** (1990–1997) who gave the OW reading in each of our services. The Year 13 and OW service was really something rather special. Featuring a set of original compositions, gifted to Woodbridge School by John Hutchings, it was a delightful evening made even more special by the guest appearance of some 2024 leavers singing in the choir.



January saw Brave Mirror Theatre Company visit School again to deliver a workshop to students from our Year 7 to 9 Scholars and Enrichment programme. Co-founder of Brave Mirror OW **Jamie Saul** (in the photo – standing back right), created a fantastic session where participants were given the prompt ‘a surprise’, and tasked with writing, rehearsing, and performing short scripts.



It is always wonderful to see the enduring nature of friendships formed at Woodbridge. These OWs who were at school during the 1960s try to have an annual get together. Their most recent gathering took place in May at West Wittering in West Sussex. L-R: **Brian Dandridge, Roger Brown-Hovelt, Stephen Fry, Simon Lane, Peter Mosley** and behind the camera **Tim Jenkins**



Also in May three more recent OWs and their families had a wonderful day at Buckingham Palace collecting their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards. L-R: 2024 leavers **Isabelle Holland, Esme Ball, Jonny Evans Lombe**



Just as this magazine was going to press a final piece of news reached us. **Russell Ling** (1940-1945) was awarded the BEM in the King's Birthday Honours for service to his local community of Otley.



To round off the academic year, something of a full circle moment for former Head Girl **Laura Hughes** (2005-2010), who we were delighted to welcome as Guest of Honour for Speech Day. In a way that was somewhat alarming for Shona she spoke without notes but was full of words of wisdom for our current students, advising them to say yes to every opportunity that is offered to them at Woodbridge, to be proud of having attended such a wonderful school and to face all that life throws at you with grit, accountability and humility.

CAREERS

As you can see from this digest, we love to welcome OWs back to school in any capacity. Perhaps the area that has seen the most development this academic year has been within careers. September saw our new Careers Advisor, Sharon Stafford, begin her new role at the school and she has hit the ground running. On the day of the Fifty Years of Girls celebration **Dr Coco Newton** (2005-2014), spoke to our students from Years 10 to 13 about her career since leaving Woodbridge. Coco's journey to her current career was not straightforward but it was interesting, challenging and exciting. The biggest takeaway for our students being that your career is not one thing set in stone, but instead a series of stepping stones you take until you find the one thing that engages you the most!

Tom Clarke (2005-2012) offered a work experience placement for one of our students last summer and subsequently came into school and spoke to Year 12 students about his firm, talking about the diversity of where and how AI is used, particularly relevant for today's students as they embark on further studies and careers.

We were delighted to welcome **Connor Grant** (2009-2016) back to School, to speak with students from Years 10 to 13 about his career and experience. At the time of his visit Connor was working for Alpine F1 in their Finance Department and had lots of advice and guidance to offer to students considering a career in finance – as well as telling them all about the world of working for Alpine F1!

Students were surprised to learn that Connor controlled the Cost Cap budget for the build of the Alpine F1 cars driven by Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly and were particularly excited as Connor had very kindly brought in two parts of an F1 car for students to examine. Just a standard day at Woodbridge...

Sam Norman (2004-2009) visited in January to talk to Year 12 students about his company Zinc, which offers a range of employment background checks and HR tool integrations. He spoke about start-up businesses and the opportunities he encountered along the way; it was a great opportunity for students to hear how being open to ideas and suggestions can lead to fruitful careers.

Ben Weston (2006-2018) spoke to students about alternatives to university. It was wonderful to hear his story and for students to hear where taking the opportunities presented to him have led him to where he is today. He talked about the success of running his own YouTube channel, as well as working in travel and tourism, teaching abroad and international relations. Living in Mongolia and running a travel business, life sounded anything but dull!

Ben also had a fantastic time catching up with his former teachers, particularly Jacky Gill and Helen Richardson. It is always a privilege for us to be part of these reunions, especially when we hear of the impact our school and teachers continue to have in your lives.



Connor Grant



Sam Norman



Ben Weston

CAREERS

More recently **Etiane Cheung** (2015–2022) visited to talk about life after Woodbridge. From Etiane: *Today, I had the opportunity to return to my old school, a place filled with memories, curiosity, and the first sparks of ambition. This time, I came not as a student, but as a speaker – to talk about university applications and life at King's College London where I've been fortunate to study, work, grow, and be challenged in the best ways.*

Whether it was discussing university life, the application process, or what it means to study in the heart of London, I hope I was able to provide some clarity and motivation. It was such a pleasure to come back and speak to the students. They were so engaged and asked brilliant questions – it felt really special to be able to return in that capacity.

A huge thank you to the staff and students for the warm welcome – and to King's College London and Woodbridge for giving me the tools and confidence to come back and share this story.

Lily Constantine (2016–2023) left Woodbridge after completing her A levels in 2023, having secured an apprenticeship with Fred Olsen Logistics Ltd. After completing her Level 2 qualification in Customer Service Skills, she moved into a full-time role at Mediterranean Shipping Company as their Transport Customer Coordinator. She returned with two colleagues to speak about life after Woodbridge, what it's like to study and work without going to university, and the exciting apprenticeship opportunities available at MSC.

Thank you to all the OWs that take time to visit School, see and spend time with our students, and offer them the chance to experience their world in many different ways. A hugely important part of our School community, we're extremely grateful to you all. I am thrilled that many OWs are already lined up to come in and inspire the next generations of OWs next year – I look forward to meeting you!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

All my years of asking OWs to keep us updated is finally reaping dividends...

Lucy Havard (1999–2007): I am in the final year of a History PhD at Cambridge, having completed an undergraduate degree in Medicine in 2013 at UCL. I've decided that I want to pursue a dual-career as a part-time medical doctor (I specialise in renal medicine) and a part-time academic historian – certainly not a conventional career path, but I'm going to give it a go!



Lucy Havard (second left)



Etiane Cheung



Lily Constantine (centre)

Nordin Catic



Lucy (centre), celebrating the Cambridge 'clean sweep'

This year, I was President of Cambridge University Boat Club, having never rowed before arriving at Cambridge. We had an incredibly successful season and achieved our second 'clean sweep' in three years (beating Oxford University in the Blue Boat, Reserve Boat and Lightweight Boat Races, on both the men's and the women's sides). It was a season tinged with disappointment, as I was not eligible to race due to the '12-year rule' (which deems anyone that matriculated for the first time over 12 years ago ineligible to race). However, despite this, I really enjoyed the role of President – I learned a lot about myself and certainly drew on my experience as Head Girl at Woodbridge (many years ago now)! Boat Race Day – definitely the best day of my university career so far!



Hannah at London's Mansion House

Hannah Whitmore (2004–2011): I was fortunate enough during my time at Woodbridge to make great use of the excellent music department, playing cello, piano and oboe in the Symphony Orchestra, String Orchestra, Wind Band and small groups at venues across Suffolk and on European tours. I have continued to play the cello and recently was lucky to be able to play as part of a trio in a truly beautiful venue.

I'm a committee member for the Harvard Club of the UK, in the events team, organising events such as our annual dinner at Emmanuel College Cambridge, networking events at the House of Lords, an alumni engagement evening at Coutts and recently, a reception at Mansion House, with the 695th Lord Mayor of London, Michael Mainelli, a Harvard graduate as our host. The event was attended by over 200 guests, and I was very pleased to be able to play the cello as part of the 'Harvard Club Trio Veritas'. It was a beautiful venue and a wonderful experience. It is so hard to keep up with playing music as an adult when it isn't part of your job, so I hope any OWs who are considering a return to school age instruments can be reassured that it is possible and great fun!

After leaving Woodbridge I went to the University of Surrey and completed a 4-year masters degree in Medicinal Chemistry with a placement year which I spent working for the Home Office, analysing drugs and explosives using the detection methods you now see at airports when you get scanned and swabbed.

I stayed at Surrey for my PhD, in Natural Products Chemistry. I was researching novel small molecule compounds from plants and synthesising similar compounds in the lab which could have future pharmaceutical benefits for treating blindness caused by diabetes and age-related macular degeneration. During my PhD, I worked in the Technology Transfer Group at the University, spent a semester undertaking research in the USA, in Indiana, won two National awards for my research, gave presentations at conferences in the UK, Europe, the USA and Kenya, and successfully applied for a



patent for one of the compounds I synthesised. My PhD supervisor was so amazing and supportive, and I was able to finish my PhD in just over 2½ years and then accept a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Harvard Medical School.

I moved to Harvard in June 2018, and I stayed there (with a break for 6 months in 2020 when I escaped home to my parents in Suffolk and worked remotely) until the end of 2021. Harvard was incredible: great people, fantastic resources, and long hours in the lab researching the biology of how we can stop diabetics from losing their vision, which is what happens in diabetic retinopathy. The Lab then

pivoted during Covid, and I applied my diabetic retinopathy research to Covid-19 infections – you may remember that diabetics were more affected by Covid than other people in the population – so it all linked up beautifully. I published ten Journal articles in my academic career.

I came back to the UK in 2021 and currently live in London, working for a US firm where I am in training to become a Patent Attorney. I work with clients to protect their inventions in small molecule drugs, medical devices, the textile industry, 3D printing and yes, eye diseases. For fun, I also play the cello in a London orchestra, and I do Scottish dancing. At school I was a member of the shooting team – enjoying competitive events at Bisley. I am fortunate to be able to keep up this hobby in London and I recently won my club's Ladies Trophy.

OW GOLF GRAFTON MORRISH TOURNAMENT 2024

Wow, what a ride! Every year we enter more in hope than expectation, and this year that was perhaps even more the case. We had a few of our regulars missing and two debutants. But in the end, we achieved our best ever performance as runners up. We were so close to victory but can only be proud of our fantastic run.



L-R: Tom Wake,
Steve Mayhew,
Steve Whymark
James Holland,
Paul Savage, Nigel
Robson, Charlie
Robson, John Logan

Qualifying in May is always a hurdle which we need to overcome. We've failed before and while we're one of the stronger schools, we can't take it for granted. We weren't at our best but got through as the sixth best qualifier out of eighteen schools in the slightly creatively titled "East Midlands" section.

The first day of the finals in October provided some extreme conditions, with winds gusting to 50mph and some early torrential rain. However, this probably suited our style and resulted in a 3-0 win over Winchester and a 2-1 win over Cranford. We then came up against much fancied Glasgow Academy in the third round. This was played in much calmer conditions, still at Hunstanton. Despite all bar one of their players being off scratch or better, all 3 of our pairs won their matches for a thumping 3-0 win.

Into the fourth round and we faced Bradfield, another very tough opponent. This was a much tighter game, but we won the first match comfortably before halving both the second and third matches. The atmosphere around the 18th green was particularly tense as we secured the crucial half in the last game.

Sunday brought only our second ever semi-final match since we joined the association in 2011. We moved to Royal West Norfolk Golf Club in Brancaster to celebrate the reopening of their historic clubhouse. A new course but the same result from the team as we trounced Charterhouse. We had finally made it into the final.

Sadly, the final was a step too far. In their sixth round in three days, the team did everything they could but sadly lost to a young Loretto side. It should be noted that Loretto has a full-scale golf academy at their school and offers numerous golf scholarships each year. To even give them a game was an incredible achievement. All six of their team play off plus handicaps.

Every member of our team can hold their head up high. We finally have our name on the honours board at Hunstanton as runners up. A huge thanks to my wonderful team, every single one of them contributing at least two points and one pair remaining unbeaten over all six matches.

Thanks also to **Ian Kitson** and **Peter Brooke** for their support, Peter (1944-1948) lives locally and has been a stalwart supporter for many years.

James Holland (1985-1993), Captain



Two of the team in
action

Supporter OW Peter
Brooke at Hunstanton



WE REMEMBER

FORMER PUPILS

Stuart Beattie: 1962-2025 (1969-1980)
Stuart Booth: 1941-2024 (1954-1959)
John Collins: 1956-2024 (1967-1974)
Michael Dean: 1949-2024 (1957-1965)
Andrew Denny: 1952-2024 (1961-1966)
Paul Everson: 1936-2025 (1945-1951)
Richard Foster: 1937-2023 (1950-1956)
David Grayson: 1945-2022 (1958-1961)
Geoffrey Hall: 1946-2024 (1960-1963)
Anthony Higginson 1936-2025 (1950-1954)
Michael Last: 1930-2022 (1938-1946)
Nigel Lewis: 1935-2024 (1947-1953)
John Pallant: 1938-2024 (1948-1955)
Bill Pulford: 1955-2024 (1967-1974)
James Robinson: 1938-2024 (1949-1957)
Colin Stannard: 1924-2023 (1935-1940)
Keith Staines: 1936-2024 (1948-1953)
Nigel Steed: 1945-2025 (1952-1955)
Neil Symon: 1953-2024 (1966-1970)

FORMER STAFF

Janet Barwell: 1946-2025 (1981-2016)
Adam Hunt: 1980-2024 (2003-2024)

CELEBRATING ADAM HUNT



The Woodbridge School community experienced a devastating loss when Adam died in December. A testament to him was that over 200 family, friends, students, OWs, parents and staff came together to remember him and give thanks for his legacy at a truly beautiful memorial service on 1 March. The Chapel was full, as was our Science Lecture Theatre, and the service was live streamed so everyone, in the UK and across the world, could join us in remembering this remarkable and lovely man. Following is the address Shona gave alongside some words from one of his former students.

The first time that I got to speak to Adam was when he had been covering my Year 7 English lesson. The class was studying Beowulf and the task that I had set had been to consider what it means to be a warrior and what qualities that individual would have.

When I returned to teach my group the next day, the class all chimed up that they wanted Mr Hunt as their teacher. In that canny way that eleven year olds have, they had tried to get Adam off the set written task at hand but he, in his masterful way, had managed to weave them a wonderful tale about forward thinking and strategy, the mind being mightier than brawn, and the key qualities of preparation and astuteness in a warrior, which, in turn, had led Adam to discuss his passion – chess.

I can still remember talking to Adam within his first few weeks here at Woodbridge about this particular lesson and the way that he had managed to ensnare all twenty of my class to now want

to take up chess. Indeed, as one of the Year 7 students who is here today as a much older individual said, "I will always remember Mr Hunt's extraordinary kindness, enthusiasm, and generosity of spirit. He had a rare ability to make everyone feel valued, and I count myself lucky to have experienced that during my time at the school."

Each of us will have our very own memories of Adam. For me, I can still see his beautiful smile and hear his distinctive laugh as he had the most incredible

sense of humour, very much needed when we were working on some tricky situations in the exam office. And I can still see his Indiana Jones style satchel bag that he wore to work – Adam was an early bird but always found time to say hello when he made his first morning cup of tea in his distinctive New York subway mug.

I am so pleased that today, we get to remember Adam here in the chapel, a place that is situated in the very heart of the school and a location that held a special



With students in 2006, the early days of Adam's Woodbridge School career



2014

place in Adam's heart too. It was here that Adam accompanied his tutees to sing many a hymn, just like Jerusalem which we sang earlier and is as close to our school anthem as you can get.

Two years after having been made an international chess master, Adam joined Woodbridge School. Despite his enormous talents, he demonstrated such gentle humility. For someone with such sky high intellect, he could converse with everyone and anyone, and was loved by all. Adam chose to share his exceptional knowledge with others, showing altruism in its purest form, and he relished helping players of every level. Whether it was someone wanting to learn a few moves to outplay their parent at home over the Christmas holidays or whether Adam was providing guidance and mentorship to a potential supreme champion, he gave equal time, care and dedication.

From teaching Biology, playing football with the students, being a considerate and dedicated junior house tutor, devoting his time as a School House tutor to our boarding community and in the last five years, being an outstanding colleague as our meticulous Exams Officer, Adam held many positions of responsibility during his two decades at Woodbridge. This

meant he encountered pretty much all of the school community at both Senior and Prep. To each of these roles he gave his absolute all, demonstrating unwavering commitment and impressive energy. You could see Adam light up when he was here at Woodbridge – he was in his element.

When we notified our community that Adam had died in December, the School was besieged with hundreds of messages, posts and condolences from former staff, parents, and pupils. People were keen to share their memories of Adam: from playing cricket late into the summer night on the beach at Camber Sands in the lead up to the National Chess Championships, through to the many chess openings

that Adam taught to former pupils that are still used to this day. One Old Woodbridgian even contacted me from New York where he now resides. This OW supports the homeless population in East Harlem and found that his segway into forming a bond and communicating with many individuals had been through the chess that he played, teaching the very moves that he had been taught by Adam.

Look around today at the number of pupils, both current and from the past, who have come to honour Adam alongside the parents who have come to accompany their children and show thanks for what Adam gave to them as a family. To all of us, Adam has in some way enriched our lives, made it that bit better, that bit brighter, that bit more rewarding.

Teaching is a vocation and to Adam, his chess teaching was his calling, his purpose, his legacy.

I will read once more the words that Adam wrote to our school community ahead of him stepping back from his day-to-day presence in the school. You can hear Adam's articulate and humble words come through with real clarity just as if he is standing here with me: *I have immensely enjoyed all the work I have done at Woodbridge over the last twenty years, all the interesting people I*



With the School House team



2019



2022 at Woodbridge School Prep

have met and being part of the wonderful and warm community that I have encountered, of which we all should feel very lucky and proud to be a part of.

At the end of Beowulf, and having encountered just one too many beasts and dragons, Beowulf's time on this earth has come to pass. His men prepare Beowulf's body to be sent on its way for the final leg of its journey:

The tale says:

"We know this much is true – and it is true for all souls: each of us will one day find that the feast is finished, and we will step backwards into our own dark hall for that final night of sleep."

You can rest well now, Adam, knowing that all the love and care you poured into your teaching holds true in your pupils – they will continue to be, and always will be,

your legacy and the greatest gift that you could have given to our school. Thank you.

Shona Norman

It is with great sadness that I write this tribute to my former chess coach, Adam Hunt, whose recent passing has left a deep void in the hearts of so many of us who were lucky enough to be taught by him.

I joined Woodbridge School in Year 10, and it was during my time there that Adam became not only my coach but a true mentor. He was instrumental in securing my chess scholarship at Woodbridge and in completely transforming the way I played. Through his coaching, I discovered the thrill and beauty of attacking chess. He gave his time generously and taught with such dedication, clarity and

passion that it was impossible not to be inspired.

During my four years at Woodbridge, we played over a hundred games representing the school. Adam had a remarkable ability to nurture talent and build confidence. It was a profound privilege to be coached by someone of his calibre at Woodbridge, a school that uniquely balanced academic excellence with an extraordinary chess programme.

Adam's influence didn't end when I left. His encouragement and belief in me inspired the next chapters of my chess journey. I founded the chess club at St John's College, Cambridge, and later became president of the Cambridge University Chess Club. Today, I run Cambridge Chess Academy, a project born out of a deep desire to carry Adam's legacy forward. My goal is to offer children the same opportunities I was so fortunate to receive under Adam's guidance: the chance to grow through competition, to develop their style and to fall in love with chess.

Adam was a rare talent and a uniquely gifted chess coach. I will always be grateful for the role he played in my life, and I hope that through this work, I can pass on even a fraction of what he gave to me, to inspire the next generation of players, just as he inspired me.

Anna York-Weaving
(2007–2011)



The Farewell Dinner for the 2022 School House boarders

FLORENCE PAUL

ANNOTT HOUSE, 2006–2015



How did you find your time at Woodbridge School?

Busy! Woodbridge provided me with so many opportunities, and I am glad to say that I tried to embrace them all. I have great memories of playing netball, hockey, rounders, swimming and athletics, taking part in various musicals and plays, singing in choirs, CCF and DofE. I felt incredibly well supported and encouraged at the school so there was never any issue with managing to balance a full extra-curricular calendar and doing my actual schoolwork. Particular credit goes to my tutor Mrs Hillman.

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

One of the best things about Woodbridge for me was the opportunity to travel. When

I was in Year 9, I was lucky enough to be able to go to Tasmania for six weeks on the Australian exchange program. The ski trips were always so much fun, both at the Prep (the Abbey) and at the senior school. One of my favourite trips with school was the choir exchange to Germany in Sixth Form. I felt part of something really special in chamber choir, all the members were super talented, and we were so well taught and encouraged by Miss Weston and Mrs Williams. I also loved my time playing sport, the countless trips to other schools around East Anglia, the hockey tour to the Netherlands, and the biathlon trips down to Bath. As for my time in school, I have very fond memories of sitting in various corridors chatting with friends, hanging around in the valley and meeting my friends in the science block toilets before school started.

Are you still in touch with any school friends?

I am still in touch with so many friends from school. I live with my best friend Sam Staines. I persuaded Sam to become my friend when we were 15 and we have never looked back. We recently went on holiday with our friendship group from school: Sam, Annie Knight-Dixon, Nell Thomas and Rob Lynch. I also recently attended the weddings of Oscar Brennecke-Dunn and Georgie Veale; both weddings had a large turnout of OWs. Having also attended Georgie's Hen do and Oscar's Stag it was



L-R: Florence, Sam Staines and Nell Thomas on ski trip 2014

PROFILE 1



PROFILE 1 – FLORENCE PAUL



L-R: Tildy Paul (sister), Julie Paul (mum), Florence and Issy Paul (sister) at Oscar Brennecke-Dunn's wedding 2025

great to have a proper chance to catch up with old friends from school. I feel very lucky to still have such valuable friendships that were formed at Woodbridge. One of my longest standing friendships is with Beccy Wilson, we met when we were 4 years old (at swimming) and she became my first friend at Woodbridge on day one in Year 5.

What did you do on leaving School?

In my first year after school, I took a year out to have some fun and save money. I worked at Woodhall Manor in Sutton and then went away to do a ski season in Meribel, France. My skiing improved a lot, as did my ability to party and then go to work the next day. I came back and worked on my dad's farm to save a bit more and then went away again to travel through East Africa. I then commenced my degree in Law and Criminology at the University of Sheffield. I loved my time in Sheffield and would recommend it to anyone. The law school was fantastic, and I was able to carry on the hobbies I had loved at Woodbridge.

What was your path to the career you have now?

Sheffield was a perfect fit for me and my academic career; I was on the law society committee during my degree and my friends and I set up one of the first Lawyers Without Borders university societies. I was privileged to be a part of the Erasmus program pre-Brexit. In my third year of university, I went to study at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. I had the best time and made some lifelong friends.



L-R: Rob Lynch, Sam Staines, Florence on holiday in Malaga 2025

It was that year that I decided to apply for a vacation scheme at Birketts LLP. It was a slightly spur of the moment decision, I applied because my friend was also applying, and I loved the idea of doing it with her. Unfortunately, she didn't get onto the scheme, so I ended up doing it alone. I was offered my training contract at the end of the vacation scheme, so I returned to Sheffield for my final year with a plan post university. I graduated Sheffield in 2020 (Covid-19 graduation) with a first-class degree and a love of criminal law.

Birketts generously funded my Legal Practice course, so I had a summer of working back on the farm and then commenced further studies at BPP in Cambridge. Unfortunately, because of Covid I ended up doing the entire year online and never met a fellow student (until some of them ended up training at Birketts with me). In 2021 I started my training contract in the Ipswich office. I had the best training contract, spending time in the Commercial Property, Charities and Family teams before qualifying into the Regulatory and Corporate Defence team in the Birketts Cambridge office.

During my legal practice course, and my training contract, I wanted to spend some more time doing something valuable, so I volunteered as an Appropriate Adult at the police station in Martlesham, assisting children and vulnerable adults in police custody. This is where my confidence and interest in criminal law grew.

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

My school career was a whirlwind and life at home was equally hectic with ballet, horses and a multitude of jobs and activities. I loved geography at school, so it seemed a good option for a degree which was my initial plan. During my university visits I stumbled upon a law lecture and found it so interesting that I felt like law could be fun. I never really knew what I wanted to do with a passion, but I have tried to take advantage of any opportunity in front of me and work hard at everything. When I started studying law, I enjoyed it, but it was when I started my training contract that I realised how much I loved practicing law. A career in law is not something you can rush, and I am aware how privileged I am to be a solicitor. Birketts is a great employer and for now I feel valued, supported and happy to work hard to progress. Every day there is a new challenge and some excitement which is what I love most about it.

What next?

I am a firm believer in thriving rather than constantly striving, so my plan now is to enjoy where I am in my career and my personal life. When you work towards something for a long time, it is lovely to enjoy where you are. I really hope to continue progressing at work, managing more complex cases



With sister Tildy outside the old Highbury Stadium before Arsenal vs Manchester United (women) 2025



L-R: Lara Bell, Georgie Veale, Florence - Georgie's Hen Do 2025

and improving at my job. In January this year I moved from Cambridge to London so I will continue exploring my new home and spending lots of time with my friends and family. In February this year I went travelling for a month around Colombia and Cuba so I would love to carry on travelling (when I am not at work).

In November last year I was lucky enough to be asked to become a Governor of the Seckford Foundation. I am really enjoying the new challenge and learning an entirely new set of skills. It was intimidating at first

but once I overcame the imposter syndrome (for the most part) I have loved it. I feel privileged to be considered for the role and I was excited to take on the opportunity and have the chance to give back to the school. It feels like a natural fit for me to be back 10 years on. So much has changed but the school has retained its core feeling and I am learning so much from the senior leadership team and the other governors. There is so much more that goes on behind the scenes than I ever could have appreciated.



With some of the Class of 2015 on the final day of Sixth Form

A mix of established and new and all equally wonderful gatherings of OWs over the last 12 months.

CLASS OF 1984 REUNION

Every September a crowd of friends meet to remember our great friend Stephen (Sid) Beresford who we tragically lost to Leukaemia in 2012. We play a game of Golf followed by a dinner at Woodbridge Golf Club expertly organised by Sid's wife Andrea and their two now young adults George and Lucy (both OWs).

That evening, Sam Stennett reminded me and Charlie Birchmore that it had been just over 40 years since we left school in 1984 so we should try and gather a crowd of our year group together to remember the good times we had at Woodbridge. I went through The Abbey, Tallents and School House so was there for 10 years and have great memories.

After a few false starts and many emails, texts, phone calls and general promotion we finally gathered in School Hall on 8 February where we were welcomed by Sam James for a cuppa. We then enjoyed a tour of the school (much changed but still very familiar) given by Jim and Ally Hillman (née Tyndale-Biscoe). Afterwards, we headed to The Mariners, where a slightly older gang of OWs were, to watch England beat France at Rugby, before going on to The Kings Head for dinner.

It was great to see everyone. Some of us had not come that far or were doubling up by visiting elderly parents etc, but Glen Symons came up from the West Country, Gavin Foster came up from Hampshire, while Lucinda Wakefield, Steve Brown, Hayton Cramphorn, Jerry Cowell (great effort, Jerry) and Andy Parkinson came down from up north (Parki from Scotland would you believe it). Not forgetting Charlie who flew in for 24 hours in the middle of a break in Portugal. Juliet Fletcher (OW 1983) interrupted her travels to be with us too. Tim Haslam joined us in the evening from a wine tasting gig he had in Covent Garden earlier that day.

We had a really lovely day and all got on well which probably wasn't always the case when we schooled together. We will definitely try and do it again as there were some who would have come if they had been available and others who just didn't fancy it, but I hope would have loved it if they had come! I hope all who were there would agree it was brilliant to remember the many friendships we made and chat about those we have sadly lost in the intervening years.

We finished off with lunch at The Bull on Sunday, where we were well looked after by Greta Cerely (class of 1986) and I got to see Dave Rea's Mum and Dad which was so lovely. They were still smiling despite us boarders eating them out of house and home most evenings after school each day back in the late 70s/early 80s.

Thanks Sam James, Sam Stennett and all who came along- see you all at the 50th Anniversary in 2034 if not before!

David Kemsley



MILITARY OWs LUNCH & CCF AGI

Never let it be said that OWs aren't made of tough stuff. In the year we celebrated fifty years since Woodbridge became co-educational, we were thrilled to welcome OW Lt Col Olivia McBride RAMS (née Berry, 1997-1999) back to school as the Inspecting Officer for this year's AGI. She was due to inspect our troops in 2023 but was deployed at the last minute. From the way Olivia threw herself into the day's activities you wouldn't have known that she had come off a hospital night shift, flown down from Scotland and then driven from Stansted to be with us!

Earlier in the morning fellow army medic Captain Imy O'Brien (1999-2011) talked to current students about her recent incredible row across the Atlantic as part of the Army Force Atlantic team: Over 40 days at sea in a compact rowing boat with 3 others, rowing 2 hours on - 2 hours off; sleep deprivation, each of them lost between 10 and 20% of their body weight, no creature comforts and no real way of being in touch with the outside world. An incredible undertaking, and to listen to Imy's reason as to why she undertook this challenge was inspiring.

Students were impressed they were tailed by sharks; my overriding memory is that their hands became moulded to the shape of the oars. So much so that, on deciding to succumb and eat the fresh oranges (1 each) they had taken on board for a treat, they couldn't peel them.

Olivia and Imy came together with other military OWs, CCF officers and our current Heads of Section, for lunch prior to the inspection. This year the weather was kind to us and the CCF were able to fully demonstrate their commitment, dedication, and hard work. All the OWs commented on how much of a credit to the school the current contingent is.



Reuniting Contingent Commander Andy Garvie (right) with his former CO - OW Roger Brunt



Shona with OW Robert Smith



Lt Col Olivia McBride



Inspecting the contingent



The OW contingent



Shona with Olivia McBride and Oscar White (Head of Contingent)



OW John Allcock (far right) trying archery for the first time

Guests: John Allcock (1962-1966) with Peter Jones, Ken Bailey (1956-1963), Mark and Lynne Baker, Alex Barclay (1997-2004), Norman and Gillian Berry, Roger Brunt (1963-1973), Stephen and Jane Cole, Andrew Jackson, Nick Kill (2014-2016), Donald and Claire Macaulay, Doug Maude, Heidi Norman, Imy O'Brien, Clive Schlee, Dan and Luisa Scott, Robert Smith (2005-2015) with Spencer Smith, David and Gemma White

HALF CENTURY CLUB LUNCH

The Half Century Club Lunch is now a firm favourite in the OW calendar and this year's event didn't disappoint. A wonderful group of OWs, all of whom left the school at least 50 years ago, met at school on 5 April. As happens every year, we welcomed another cohort to the 'club', this year the honour fell to the Class of 1975, a good number of whom joined us for a trip down memory lane and to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of their leaving Woodbridge.

Beginning with a catch up over coffee, many laughs and memories were shared and made. I was delighted that Nick Smith, our Head of History, agreed to return as our speaker after a successful debut in 2024. He treated us to a fascinating talk on Thomas Seckford which was followed by a delicious lunch in the Tuckwell Room.

Every year I put myself through the ordeal of making a speech at the end of lunch (note to self: perhaps change this in future so I can enjoy the lunch more!). I touched on the fiftieth anniversary of Woodbridge becoming co-educational. After all, the 1975 leavers were amongst the first boys to welcome girls to Woodbridge (I suspect some OWs wish this had happened earlier!), no doubt they have some tales to tell... The arrival of girls at Woodbridge brought the opportunity for Woodbridgian couples, there have been many over the years, and it was wonderful that the mother and OW brother of the groom from the first ever double OW wedding attended the lunch.



Tom Rhind-Tutt (1938-1944) proudly the oldest OW present at 98



Geoff Garrad-Cole (1958-1963) and David Busby (1950-1960)

The Class of 1975 – newest members of the OW Half Century Club hosted by Shona. Class of 1976 – it'll be your turn next year!



The Tuckwell Room, practically unchanged since 1962



Head Boy James Hattan with Ken Bailey (1956-1963)



1950s leavers hosted by Stephen Cole and James Hattan



Quentin Cowdray (1964-1974), Fay Cowdry (brother and mother of the groom...) with Hugh Metcalfe (1966-1973)



Chris Bill (1951-1957), James Hattan, Geoffrey Johns (1950-1956)



3 Heads of School and 1 Alumni Officer welcoming guests



We couldn't do it without them! Head Chef Pascal Pommier and Senior Sous Chef Jason d'Inverno



The Class of 1975, L-R: Robert Smith, Paul Chamberlain, Andrew Doble, Steven Dewberry, Erik Hedling and Chris Ward

Once the personal agony of my speech was over, I handed over to our Heads of School; James, Georgie and Rose. These three were excellent hosts, spoke movingly about their time at Woodbridge and led tours of the school for OWs alongside my colleague Emma Rutterford who took some former residents of School House for a tour of their old home.

As at every OW event, it was wonderful to witness the friendships and laughter on display and a privilege to be a part of (it was also definitely a more joyous occasion than the Ipswich game which both Nick and James had been wondering if they had time to get to after the lunch).

Save the Date



OW Half Century Club Lunch
Saturday 18 April 2026

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST



Shakespeare on the Lawn is always the perfect way to round off Trinity Term. As our Head of Drama has been at school for a few years now we have reached the point that she is recycling plays. Thus, a new OW event was created – Shakespeare on the Lawn reunions. In 2022, the 2011 cast of Twelfth Night returned to Woodbridge School for a reunion event centered around our latest performance of that play. It was such a enjoyable evening we decided to make the Shakespeare on the Lawn reunions an annual event. This year the play was Love's Labour's Lost, and we were delighted to welcome some of the cast members from the 2016 production for a drinks reception and picnic with Shona prior to watching the 2025 show. What was particularly special was that Alex Evans Lombe from the 2016 cast was able to watch his sister in this year's performance.

CLASS OF 2005 TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

The brainchild of OW Lisa Pang, who flew over from her home in Hong Kong to attend. Saturday 5 July will see many of the Class of 2005 and their families come together for a Barbecue on Chapel Lawn to celebrate 20 years since they left school. Print deadlines mean I'm writing this before the event (but hope to squeeze a photo in) but I know it is going to be fantastic!





OWs WHO SERVE

Woodbridge School CCF has been going strong for 117 years and the school is proud of the many OWs who have gone on to serve in the forces, many of whom were recognised and decorated for their service. In the year the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II was commemorated we meet some OWs, spanning eight decades, who chose to serve. All of whom cite their experiences within the CCF as a major factor towards their chosen career and all of whom have given back to Woodbridge School in more ways than one.



Name: ROBERT LIGHTFOOT AFC FRAES

Woodbridge School: 1951 – 1958

Service: Royal Air Force

Service Years: 35

Rank: Air Commodore

My family home in Martlesham was under the approach paths for three airfields: Bentwaters, Woodbridge and Martlesham Heath. That regular exposure to aircraft (including one that dropped a fuel tank in the School grounds) put military flying well to the fore of my mind. Being in the RAF section of the CCF at Woodbridge only added to my lifetime attraction to flying. The History master Mr J N Stevens was in charge of the RAF section and generously awarded me promotions to Cadet Warrant Officer where I became the Contingent Commander. Many of my weekends during my schooldays were spent gliding with the Air Training Corps at RAF Martlesham Heath. A special event was a Flying Scholarship taken at Cambridge Airport where I gained a Private Pilot's Licence on the De Havilland Tiger

Moth. With encouragement from JNS, I won a Scholarship to the RAF College Cranwell. My A Levels resulted in a School Exhibition, but the monetary part was withheld because a Flight cadet at Cranwell had

board and lodging and earned a modest salary!

Cranwell in those days was a three-year course ending with the award of Wings as a Pilot and for me, a posting to Northumberland as a Flying Instructor. Two happy years followed, then the eagerly anticipated move to the Lightning Fighter. Although this Mach 2 Fighter was based overseas in Singapore, Cyprus and Germany, my destiny was the UK. One benefit from a home posting was the opportunity to fly the Lightning at air shows and I became the RAF's principal Lightning Aerobatic Display Pilot.



Robert with Shona at the CCF AGI OWs Lunch 2023

Staff work at HQ No.11 Group brought me 'down to earth' but nonetheless it was an enjoyable experience with time to do a brief parachute course.

More flying followed and then a big change with a posting to Australia for an academic year. The Ministry of Defence followed where I worked in the spooky corridors of Intelligence. Trips to secret locations, false passports and attending meetings at the USA Central Intelligence Agency provided plenty of excitement. Moreover, it illustrated the variety of employment in the career of an RAF pilot. Flying resumed as the Squadron Commander of a front-line Fighter Squadron.

A spell on the Directing Staff at the National Defence College further illustrated the variety – marking essays at 5 o'clock in the morning was not something I envisaged in earlier years.

After commanding a Station in Wales it was off to war. Almost. It was the Falkland Islands just after the 1982 war ended and strong forces were needed to deter any revenge attacks. My Command covered 1000 airmen and an Infantry Company at RAF Stanley, three radar stations and a watching brief on a new airfield under construction. Round



Robert receiving the first Tucano for the RAF

Right: Corporal Lightfoot in his CCF days with ATC Glider



the clock vigilance was needed throughout the six months I lived there.

A Public Relations post followed, involving lectures to the public, Industry, Educational Centres (including one lecture at Woodbridge School) and live media interviews.

Exposure to top officials at the prestigious Royal College of Defence Studies opened the door to wider experiences including time at Whitehall in Central Staffs as Director of Defence Policy and Head of Flying Training.

The aggregate of those 35 years of service set me up for my final post – an RAF appointment as Commander HM Royal Flight Oman. Who could have imagined that from those early days at Woodbridge?



Name: GRAHAM PECK

Woodbridge School: 1956 – 1963
(School House Boarder)

Service: Royal Navy (Fleet Air Arm)

Service Years: 8

Rank: Lieutenant

I grew up in an aviation environment; my father had flown bombers with the RAF in the Second World War and

subsequently transferred to BOAC in 1946. The family then moved to Bahrain in 1952, my father having been seconded to Gulf

Aviation, which was starting up with support from BOAC. I spent many afternoons at the airfield watching aircraft come and go whilst waiting for him to land, after which I would sit with him in the cockpit while he taxied the aircraft to the maintenance hangar for the night. This sowed the seeds of my plan to become a pilot in the RAF.

Later, having joined Woodbridge School I joined the CCF and transferred to the RAF section. This gave me

OWS WHO SERVE

the opportunity to learn to fly, initially a few hops in the school glider from a bungee launch across the playing field. This in turn led to the opportunity to gain my Gliding Licence at Martlesham airfield and I will always remember my first solo flight there.

The next step was the RAF Flying Scholarship which I completed during one Easter holiday period at Marshalls in Cambridge. With a year to go before leaving the school



Graham revisiting School House 2019



HMS Victorious 1967 in the South China Sea approx 100 nms West of Manila. Graham climbing on board pre-launch for an air defence sortie in a Sea Vixen FAW2

I turned my thoughts towards applying to the RAF. I remember going to the school library where I gathered the available Armed Forces recruitment information. I had been having reservations regarding the RAF as station visits always seemed to be at rather dull bomber or transport bases and none of the earlier school leavers I knew, that had joined the RAF, had been streamed on fast jets which was my target. I picked up the Royal Navy information and on the front page was a picture of a Fleet Air Arm strike fighter. In that moment, I knew that was what I wanted to do. I immediately applied and in September 1963 I joined Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth to



Graham in School House 1962

begin officer training that led to flying training.

Three years later in 1966 I joined my first front line squadron going to sea on the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious. In the years that followed I became a Qualified Flying Instructor and taught for two years at the Royal Naval Advanced Flying Training School before returning to sea on HMS Ark Royal. This experience served me well when transferring to the airlines after eight years with the Navy. I flew for a further thirty years, reaching senior management level. None of this would have been possible were it not for the grounding and opportunities gained at Woodbridge School.



Rick (back row, third left): RAF CCF Camp at RAF Waddington April 1977

Africa during our gap year. I enjoyed the Scholarship so much that I followed it up with an RAF University Cadetship at Warwick – this entailed flying whenever practicable at Birmingham University Air Squadron and being paid such that I felt like a wealthy student (an oxymoron, I know).

After University, it was straight into four months of officer training at RAF College Cranwell before the Jet Provost (constant noise, variable speed machine) course, also at Cranwell. Subsequently, I went to RAF Valley in Anglesey, where I had been to a CCF camp some 10 years prior, and spent six months flying the Hawk (which

the Red Arrows fly). It's remarkable how frequently one can get lost flying in Wales at 250feet and 480mph and thus I went to fly the C130 Hercules based at RAF Lyneham. I had found my Utopia – I worked on the ground and in the air of all seven continents, and in a wonderful variety of roles including air-to-air refuelling as both tanker and receiver, low level air drops of troops and supplies at night, siege busting in Sarajevo, Kabul and Iraqi mountains and short-notice evacuation of British citizens due to medical emergency or other threats to their safety.

During the Gulf War, I was captain of a Hercules, taxiing at

night, in a desert location and was suddenly forbidden to take off due to an air raid – it was hot, I was wearing an aircrew gas mask with associated kit and felt like a very large, stationary target. I had plenty of time to reflect on the events that had led me to this comical situation, thus my mind turned to the School CCF and Cliff Walters. I wrote to Cliff at the very next opportunity to recount this and was grateful to remain in contact with him until his sad and premature death in 2013.

I completed four Hercules pilot tours as I climbed the greasy career pole to command 24 Squadron, bringing the new C130J into service as lead customer. Subsequently, I worked in MOD Whitehall for ten years so that I could move my family back to Woodbridge. Primarily in procurement of large aircraft and Special Forces equipment, then NATO and EU Policy whilst being UK Defence Attaché to Ireland.

After this, I had a portfolio career for a few years, happily based in Woodbridge, and joined the OW Liaison Group.

Regrets, I've had a few, but then again.... if I went back to 1979, I would opt to have the same career all over again.



Name: RICK HOBSON

Woodbridge School: 1969–1979

Service: RAF

Service Years: 32

Rank: Group Captain

Rick as
Inspecting
Officer:
Woodbridge
School CCF
AGI 2022



My father was an RAF pilot, so it seemed logical to join the RAF section of the CCF under Norman Stevens and, subsequently Cliff Walters.

Cliff, someone that I will be forever grateful to, was also my mentor for the Birkbeck career IQ tests (remember those?!) and suggested an RAF Flying

Scholarship. This led to a Private Pilot Licence when I left School, aged 17. As an aside, Olly Hicks (69–79) and I followed Cliff out to Kearsney College in South

Rick with his
team in their
desert location
for flying
supplies into
Kabul when it
was besieged by
the Taliban 2002



OWS WHO SERVE



Name: MATTHEW BOWDEN
Woodbridge School: 1982-1989
Service: Royal Navy
Service Years: 26
Rank: Commander

So Matt – why the Royal Navy?? Well, I do remember in the fifth year sitting down with Jeff Leslie, who ran the Careers Office at Woodbridge School, to use the career profile programme. The five career recommendations it gave me were Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army, Police, and Dustman. Fairly conclusive regarding my career path but also intriguing as to why it selected Dustman not Royal Air Force!!

I passed my Admiralty Interview Board and joined the Royal Navy as a Weapons Engineer and attended Sheffield University before completing my initial officer training at Dartmouth Royal Naval College. I first joined HMS Glasgow on operations during the Balkans conflict in 1994, then HMS Lancaster, HMS Kent and HMS Cornwall followed. I particularly loved my role as navigator and boarding officer, leading an armed team deploying onto vessels on passage by fast roping from helicopters to apprehend sanctions breakers and drug smugglers.

This period also included my first experience of working with the Royal Marines, my first incoming mortar rounds and saw the end of my wish to be trained as an engineer! Selected as a Principal Warfare Officer responsible for executing the combat function of a warship, I transferred from engineering to warfare as a career path. There

was also a significant cocktail party onboard HMS Norfolk in Barbados where I met the British High Commissioner's daughter. My Captain gave me the instructions to "look after Lizzie", which I obeyed to the letter – we recently celebrated our silver wedding anniversary!

After time in HMS Ocean and HMS Invincible participating in Gulf War II and Operation TELIC, I found myself as part of the Maritime Counter Terrorism Team. This involved the UK military response to the 7/7 terror attacks and other interesting evolutions including a hostage rescue operation in Africa. Serving across a wide variety of Royal Navy warships including Mine Countermeasure Vessels, Frigates, Destroyers, and Aircraft Carriers, I have also spent time onboard



Matt aboard HMS Quorn

American, French, Spanish, Australian and Dutch warships.

During my career I was privileged to be appointed the Fleet Communications Officer, Captained several warships, and commanded an operational headquarters in the Middle East. My time in the Royal Navy has seen me sail across the seven seas including both Arctic and Antarctic waters.

Memorable highlights include the Northern Lights at sea in high latitudes which are truly incredible, seeing the blue whale, which is awe-inspiring and I have witnessed luminous schools of jellyfish so thick you believe you can walk on them – although a young Royal Marine proved you cannot!

In 2007 I came alongside Ipswich in HMS QUORN and hosted my parents and Woodbridge School friends onboard which brought an immense sense of pride, but my lasting memory of that visit was how narrow the River Orwell lock is when you are driving a warship not a yacht!

These opportunities allowed me to mentor and support some truly brilliant young sailors and marines. My approach to



Matt in his post-Navy role as Director of Red Penguin Marine



Matt (back row, second left) with the Woodbridge School Shooting Team: winners of the Cottesloe Vase at Bisley 1988

mentoring came from my Dad, who gave everyone a chance to shine and develop their experience at every opportunity and impressed on me to always support and encourage others. This approach was mirrored in how the staff, including Charlie Corner, Mary Liley and particularly Jim Bryant, developed us as CCF Cadets at Woodbridge. I am proud to say many of my crew and subordinates over the years took my style of leadership to heart. There have now been

several warship Captains in His Majesty's Navy employing a very unique, relaxed but highly effective style of leadership, inspired by a New Orleans jazz drummer and the teaching staff at Woodbridge School.

I left the Royal Navy in 2019 after 26 years service on the realisation that future promotions meant a desk and no more time at sea or truly operational. Today, I am a Director of Red Penguin Marine, a submarine cable engineering company advising our global

client base, the UN and several governments on all aspects of subsea cables. It is a long way from throwing paper darts out of the top floor of the old teaching block in Mr Weaver's history lesson and yes David Goddard, he always reminded me he caught us! The foundations built at Woodbridge School have taken me on a fabulous journey, and to put things in context, my Mum still believes that my 'B' at French O Level from Woodbridge still ranks amongst my greatest achievements!



Name: OLIVIA MCBRIDE (NÉE BERRY)
Woodbridge School: 1997-1999
Service: Army
Service Years: 21
Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

I spent two fantastic years at Woodbridge School, from 1997-1999. I was a little late joining the CCF, but the year I spent with the Army section clearly left its mark, as this was the sum total of my military experience when I joined the Army in 2004 on a

medical cadetship. I have happy memories of overnights in Thetford Forest, extremely old rations and swim tests in the school pool!

Fast forward 21 years and I am now a Consultant Army vascular surgeon, working in



Olivia and family

OWS WHO SERVE



Olivia (front row, second left) on the last day at Woodbridge School 1999

Dundee, Scotland. I completed my medical training at the University of Edinburgh and following house jobs, I attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the Defence Medical Academy, before being posted as Regimental Medical Officer to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, in Germany. I undertook an Operational Tour in Iraq and a number of Exercises with the Regiment. I returned to Edinburgh in 2009 to start surgical training, initially in general surgery, before switching to vascular surgery. During this time, I spent two years undertaking a postdoctoral research degree (MD). On completion of my surgical training, the Military supported a

Below: Olivia as Inspecting Officer: Woodbridge School CCF AGI 2025



year long fellowship in complex aortic surgery, in Oslo, Norway.

Consultant life is busy and juggling NHS and military commitments is tricky. Ensuring I remain clinically current for my vascular NHS practice as well as prepared for the generality of military trauma surgery is a challenge, but we are incredibly well supported with training and fellowship opportunities.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have had so many fantastic opportunities, both professionally and personally, as a result of my military service. But the absolute highlight of my military career are the people I work with, the professionalism, camaraderie and collective sense of "we will make it happen".



Imy and the Force Atlantic Crew: 2024



Imy (second left) during her Woodbridge School CCF days

and London while I applied to join. I am a Professional Qualified Officer (PQO) so completed the shorter commissioning course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. This was 10 weeks long before I commissioned into the Royal Army Medical Service. I was then sent to our Military hospital in Birmingham for two years to gain specific qualifications that are required for my role.

I am a physiotherapy Officer and have just left a field unit which saw me do more traditional regimental duty jobs, not related to physiotherapy. This gave me a broader understanding of how the Army works while also maintaining my clinical skills. I am now an Officer commanding one of our Primary

Care Rehabilitation units. My day to day sees me treating our injured service personnel while also running the department. The Army only holds a small number of serving physiotherapists. We provide a deployable asset that can be used and sent to wherever is needed.

I was part of the CCF from Year 9 until I left at the end of Year 11. I went on a number of adventure training weeks and spent a lot of my lunch breaks shooting in the ranges. Mr Garvie and Mr Stollery are legends and my experience of the CCF at Woodbridge was the

main driving factor for me to join regular service.

I have just returned home from leading the military's first all-female team to row the Atlantic, so should probably do my day job for a bit! It was a wild adventure and mad that I got to call it work. I'm not sure what's next but there are so many exciting opportunities available, whether that be deploying around the world, playing sport or going on another expedition. I'm not particularly good at sitting still so I am sure I will fill my time with something fun pretty soon.



Imy (third left) with the ward team at the military hospital in Birmingham



Name: IMY O'BRIEN

Woodbridge School: 1999-2011

Service: Army

Service Years: 5

Rank: Captain

Having spent a few years in the NHS I was looking for more challenge and variety in my role as a physiotherapist. I knew the Army would offer me both, but also I found an incredible cohort of people, always willing and up for exciting and fun adventures.

Following university I worked in the NHS for a few years out of GP practices both in Suffolk

FROM WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL PREP

The Gift of Opportunity

"The best thing anyone can do in life is to give opportunities to their child." This simple truth has echoed throughout our corridors this year, guiding our decisions, shaping our planning, and reinforcing our unwavering commitment to opening doors—both literal and metaphorical—for every child in our community.

From the first day of term, we embraced Opportunity not just as a theme, but as a thread: one that has been stitched into every assembly, every lesson, every moment of growth. This year has seen innovation meet empathy, academic rigour balanced by emotional care — echoing Professor Mona Siddiqui's reminder that, *"we overlook how important emotional wellbeing is to academic attainment."*

Our CLICK Days have once again stood as joyful landmarks in the calendar, each one a celebration of a core learning attribute: Communication through ClickBiz; Leadership via the Christmas Origami Challenge; Initiative with our inventive Box Challenge; Collaboration on Eco Day; and, as always, Kindness,

this time personified through the inspiring story of Onyx the Unique Stone. These days have given our pupils time to lead, reflect, create and, most of all, to shine.

Across the year, our outreach work has continued to expand. Whether singing with our Community Choir or welcoming toddlers to Stay and Play, our connections beyond the school gates have remained strong. This year, we proudly opened up our ponds for community exploration, thanks to our long-standing collaboration with Suffolk Wildlife Trust, and joined Transition Woodbridge's *Open Wild Garden* event — an initiative that allows our children to engage with nature whilst also giving back.

Within our own walls, we've pushed boundaries. From introducing *Century Tech* to strengthen individualised learning in maths, to redesigning our curriculum to challenge and stretch all pupils through our NACE membership, our focus has been to prepare children not only for the next stage, but for the world beyond. The new library catalogue system has seen our



reading spaces come alive again, used not just for learning but for quiet reflection — a moment of pause in a busy day.

Nowhere is the balance of excellence and opportunity more visible than in our co-curricular life. From athletics to origami, from elite running clubs to musical productions—every child in Years 3 to 6 has represented the school in sport this year. A record 205 fixtures have taken place, with remarkable achievements in hockey, football, cricket, swimming, netball and cross-country. The U11 girls were crowned Suffolk County Champions in hockey and IAPS Bowl Winners; the boys narrowly missed out on a place in the final on penalty flicks; our swimmers placed in the top 100 nationally. These moments of glory have



been matched by countless quieter triumphs—of resilience, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Academically, our pupils have excelled too. In national maths competitions, over half achieved bronze, silver or gold, with several reaching bonus rounds — a reflection not just of skill, but of the confidence and curiosity nurtured in every classroom. Our focus on *Higher Order Thinking Skills* has permeated learning from Year 2 upwards, supported by INSET training, targeted lesson planning and the ever-growing confidence of both staff and pupils to ask questions that truly matter.

The arts have flourished: *Rock Bottom*, *Twinkly Nativity* and our upcoming production of *Aladdin Jr* have brought the stage alive. Meanwhile, our newly launched *Wonder of Words Festival* has celebrated the joy of language across all year groups, from poetry recitals to the lightning wit of 'Just Half a Minute.'

We have also made time to listen. This year saw the launch of

additional in-person progress meetings, 'Open Classroom' events and a revised report format—all designed to better communicate pupil growth and provide more opportunity for partnership with parents. Our consistent tutoring model and the warmth of the daily Form Teacher handover remain key to the strength of our community.

And what a community it is. As ever, FOWS have played their part in bringing joy through the Christmas and Summer Fairs, while our parent body has wrapped around one another with compassion and strength — especially during moments of personal loss. In the face of grief, our values have not wavered; if anything, they have drawn us closer.

Bailey, our fox-red Labrador and beloved School Dog, has become something of a mascot for the emotional heart of the school. He has supported concerts, calmed nerves, walked beside pupils and staff alike—

and quietly reminded us all of the power of presence.

And so, as we prepare to say goodbye to our Year 6 pupils, many of whom joined us in Reception, we do so with a mixture of pride and hope. We know we have given them opportunities — in learning, in leadership, in life — and we trust that they will step forward with courage, kindness and the will to be their very best. Two rules that have guided us all year long, and which will continue to serve them well, wherever their journey leads.

Our thanks, as always, go to those who have helped us along the way; supporting from the offices, nourishing us from the kitchen, ensuring our environment is safe and beautiful for our community to thrive, and inspiring us in the classrooms and beyond. The opportunities we offer are only as powerful as the people who seize them. And seize them, they have.

Nicola Mitchell

Head, Woodbridge School Prep



TIM COOK & WILLARD HOUSE, 1991-1998 TIM RIPMAN SECKFORD HOUSE, 1988-1999

Our first two-handed profile, what better way to demonstrate the strength of friendships formed at Woodbridge.



Tim Cook and Tim Ripman

How did you find your time at Woodbridge School?

TC: I absolutely loved it, looking back it felt like quite an idyllic time. I had a really great group of friends, many of whom remain great friends to this day. It offered me the chance to get involved with sport, music, drama, CCF and much more. As with many things, when young I never appreciated how lucky I was to go to Woodbridge School until far later in life.

TR: Still regarded as and always will be some of the most memorable years of my life. I had two innings with a gap at boarding school (OBH) in between – the prep (Abbey!) Years 3-6 and senior; Years 9-13 in total covering 1988-1999. I tell my children how lucky they are and to enjoy every moment.

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

TC: So many memories! Although I think my favourites were probably two hockey tours we did. One to the Netherlands and another to Barcelona. Aside from the sport, the travelling and the staying away from home, I'm left with many memories that still make me laugh to this very day. We were lucky to have some great teachers on these trips who gave us a long enough leash to have some fun but at the same time kept us in check!

TR: Friends, teachers – some of whom are still there! – sport, ski trips and CCF all come to mind. Stand-out memories have to be success on the sports fields and representing the school for two years at Combat Cadet, which



With 1998 leavers at Thorpeness golf club: Tim C, Tim R, Simon Drane, Matt Burden, Jonny Manning, David Henderson, Olly Grundy

included some silverware. In fact, there was a very special moment recently when one of my son's best friends in Year 6 won a trophy that had my name engraved on it from 1992 and also included a certain Mr Pineo...

Are you still in touch with any school friends?

TC: A vast amount. Both in my school leaving year (1998) and others, notably my (now) business partner and good friend Tim Ripman. From my year group I see Dave Henderson, Jonny Manning, Nick Davis, Cain Berry, Simon Drane, Alex Boxall, Olly Grundy and Matt Burden. Randomly we were all the second child in our family! Since returning to the area in 2018 to live in Woodbridge I see so many OWs and their families, whether it's at kids' clubs for football, hockey, cricket or rugby, or simply wandering down the Thoroughfare. My sister Georgie and brother Olly are also OWs.

TR: Very much so. In my opinion, Woodbridge School is a special place for this reason. These friends range from older and younger ones that have all been through the school and

either kept in contact, returned to the area and/or are now Woodbridge School parents themselves. There is a closer, inner-core too; most of whom I see on a regular-ish basis and regard as my best friends (best-men & ushers at my wedding in 2011). For the best part of 30 years, my brother Josh (2000 leaver) and I have hosted an OW football match on Boxing Day; an absolute must in many people's diaries, each and every year. Both Josh and my sister, Alice (2004 leaver) live locally, and we're blessed to see a lot of each other.



Tim C in CCF gear. 1993

What did you do on leaving school?

TC: Straight after school I took a year out; worked for 6 months and travelled for 6 months across South-East Asia, Australia and many other wonderful places. Upon my return I completed a 4-year degree in Finance at Bournemouth University. Thereafter I spent 20 years in financial markets, mostly based in the City of London. Earlier this year I packed up my city career to pursue Curious Retreats full time.

TR: I had a fantastic three years in Nottingham at Nottingham Trent University studying Business, Leisure and Sport, even managing to come out with a degree (2:1)! Like at Woodbridge, I made some life-long friends there and had a proper university experience. Thereafter, it was a year travelling; like many, doing a similar route around the world over 12 months; something I would encourage any post-school/university student to do.

What was your path to the career you have now?

TC: We started Curious Retreats in early 2023 and my education in the tourism and short-let stay business started there. My career in finance and particularly



Tim R triumphant at a Woodbridge School Sports Day

PROFILE 2 & 3 – TIM COOK & TIM RIPMAN

start-up businesses helped a lot in terms of understanding how to organise a company structure and other areas such as budgeting and financial forecasting. TR thankfully brought along direct knowledge of the holiday cottage world thanks to his previous career.

TR: I've always had an interest and passion for hospitality, especially hotels. I was very fortunate to work in some well-known Nottingham and London establishments across a variety of departments, but it was apparent that a front of house/operations role was the one for me.



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

TC: Not in the slightest when it comes to my current career! But in all honesty, I never felt tied to a work sector like some do. I've always enjoyed letting chance and opportunity dictate the way, as opposed to being prescriptive in my journey. With regards family,

life-work balance and living locally I couldn't be any happier. Not what I expected when I was younger but certainly what I hoped for.

TR: Other than a brief dream of becoming a commercial airline pilot, yes, a customer facing career was always for me. The fact it includes a lot of stylish accommodation, delicious food & drink and interesting/inspirational people along the way, I feel I have lucked out.

What next (in an ideal world?)

TC: From a career perspective we grow Curious Retreats into the best company it can possibly be and create many happy memories along the way. If nothing else, life has taught me the journey is often far better than the destination. Domestically, I hope my three young boys (Sebastian, Milo and Charlie) navigate primary and secondary school as well as they can and turn into good human beings with decent values. They can be both frustrating and wonderful in equal measure!

TR: Curious Retreats... How amazing to be doing my own thing that I have so much passion and pride for, with a best mate. It is hard work and early days, however, with both Tim C and I at the controls and with amazing support, I hope this will be an extremely successful 10/20/30-year project of ours. Just as importantly, I want to continue watching my two children enjoy Woodbridge School as much as I did.



Tim C aged 11 at his first Woodbridge School Sports Day



L-R: Tim, Alice and Josh Ripman – schooldays

FROM THE HEADS OF SCHOOL

We have been blessed with three amazing individuals as Heads of School this year and I have been extremely fortunate to have them by my side at two OW events. As we thank them for what they have given us, they share what Woodbridge has given them.



James Hattan, Georgie Phillips & Rose McBride at the OW Half Century Club Lunch 2025

I worry slightly that when the rest of the students of Woodbridge return in September, I will not be among them. I will not be in Sixth Form anymore; I won't have lessons, I won't sit in the dining hall, I won't be on the sports field or in the theatre, I won't spend my free periods at the sewing machine or my lunchtimes at

choir practice and I won't be alongside the people I have spent the better part of seven years with. All the things I have come to see as the everyday will have become a piece of my memory kept away in a folder in my brain, entitled Woodbridge.

If you know me, it is safe to assume that part of this file will

be dedicated to the drama department, who have been at the core of my Woodbridge experience. Before exams, Mr Williams and Ms Mayes rooted out an old video from Year 7 of me and James as superheroes and to no one's surprise we have not changed a bit. Amongst my superhero persona is a host of characters from Mum in 'A Monster Calls' to a supreme in 'Little Shop of Horrors' and Elizabeth in 'Frankenstein'. I have never known laughter like that in the rehearsal rooms for 'Jack Absolute' or the number of times I've heard James Brown's I Feel Good in a drama lesson.

For most of the year I am by no means an athlete, however, in the Michaelmas term I grab my stick, lace up my boots and head down to the hockey pitch. Nothing gets my heart racing and competitive side going more than going in for a tackle or defending a short corner. The only downside is that by the time I'm finally fit enough the season is already



Rose creating costumes, combining her love of both Drama and Art



Rose and James on stage in the Seckford Theatre

over. Without the leadership from our 1st team captain Millie Johnson and the dedication from Ms Rix, my time as hockey player would not be the same. To connect with others through a shared passion and commitment is a skill Woodbridge has always encouraged, and I hope to carry into the future.

I feel sometimes we take the experiences and opportunities we are given for granted, not paying close enough attention to

the people who make it possible. The teachers, the administrators, the heads of school, Georgie and James, and Ms Norman truly put their all into making Woodbridge the magical place it is. Behind my informative trip to Berlin and Krakow, there was a teacher who sawed off my broken suitcase handle; behind my countless art projects, there was a friend who tried on and posed for my creations; and behind the wonderful 50 Years of

Girls at Woodbridge event was Mrs James and the administrative and marketing team who made sure everything ran smoothly. Without the efforts of the Woodbridge community, I would not have had even half of some of my most exciting experiences.

I'm sure, like me, my classmates as they begin this new chapter will be hesitant to close its predecessor, because despite its homework deadlines and exams, Woodbridge School is a truly wonderful place. It has allowed me to pursue my passions and has given me the drive and confidence to achieve them. It has become synonymous with the feeling of warmth and support, and I know even as I leave, now an Old Woodbridgian, this school will always be there beside me. So, if I am in my university accommodation or lying on a beach in Australia and I am feeling down, I will reach back into my library of memories, pull out this file and flick through its pages. And what I feel won't be the worry for the future but the joy of the past.

Rose McBride
Deputy Head Girl 2024/2025

biology essays in my final weeks of A level revision. Or Mrs McNally who was always available to answer my absurd and stupid questions about Chemistry. And of course our iconic duo in Sixth Form, Mrs Pilkington and Mr Beasant. They get to know every student's quirks and passions remarkably quickly and start to treat each student as the adult they are becoming. I wish I could go on and on but sadly there is not enough room on this page.

This school has given me so much more than just an education. It's where I found my confidence – on stage during musicals, in debates in the Model United Nations, or on a sports pitch in the freezing cold. It's where I discovered the power of perseverance, learnt to laugh at myself, and realised that the best lessons often come outside the classroom. Like when in Year 3 my classmates adapted our daily game of 'It' into 'walking it' to accommodate me being on crutches. It has always been a place where students are intent on looking out for others.

In Sixth Form, I was lucky to be involved in leadership roles that pushed me out of my comfort

zone and gave me a brief glimpse at adult life. Whether it was attending heads of school conferences, welcoming prospective pupils, or setting up a student council, I've felt incredibly proud to represent a school that values kindness, community, character and excellence.

Of course, Woodbridge is rightly proud of its academic record but more than that, it's a place that gives young people the courage to pursue their interests, no matter how weird, wonderful, or offbeat they may be. I've seen classmates bring down the house with West End-worthy vocals, dazzle on the saxophone and drums, and, most memorably, perform five minutes of animal impressions to What Does the Fox Say? – to thunderous applause.

That moment, as ridiculous as it sounds, captures something important: the courage to be yourself, even when it's a bit absurd.

That's what Woodbridge has given me: the confidence to try, to fail, to laugh at myself, and to grow. At Woodbridge I have flown a plane, portrayed a drunken uncle in a Shakespeare production and a cheerleader in Grease the musical – despite



Georgie presenting her EPQ

the fact I cannot sing, dance or act. All of these opportunities were completely out of my comfort zone when I signed up for them but in every single one, I had a great time, met some amazing people, and developed skills in different areas. And if there is one thing I will take away from my time at Woodbridge it is the philosophy to always say yes to new opportunities no matter your natural ability or confidence in that area. It is an approach that I see in all of my peers and it is Woodbridge that has instilled this confidence to not find uncertainty and inexperience as a barrier to progression and opportunity.

So as I look towards university, I am of course extremely excited and feel well equipped for whatever life has to throw at me. But I will miss Woodbridge and the people here immensely. I consider myself extremely lucky to have been able to attend such a wonderful school and I can't wait to return as an Old Woodbridgian.

Georgina Phillips
Head Girl 2024/2025

As I sit down to write this, the realisation that my time at this school is drawing to a close still hasn't quite sunk in. After fourteen years, it's surreal to think this chapter is ending. From my first steps into Year 1 with a Tupperware full of Babybells and Moshi Monsters to my final A level exams, this school has shaped so much of who I am. And it is without doubt that the major part in this has been played by my teachers. Their dedication, passion and enthusiasm truly shapes this special community.

Sadly, there is no way, in one article, that I can demonstrate

how grateful I am to so many teachers, but I would like to say that the teachers here at Woodbridge are fundamentally inspirational. Whether that is Mrs Hillman's quirky dances to remember mechanisms in Chemistry, Mrs Brown's beautiful diagrams or my Year 6 teacher Mr Smith's sesquipedalian spelling challenges – I have found myself loving subjects that I would have never even have considered when I first started, due to teachers who genuinely adore their subjects. When such passion is present it really does become infectious and I am so

grateful for every single teacher at Woodbridge.

To say the teachers at Woodbridge go above and beyond is a complete understatement. Throughout my time at Woodbridge there have been countless teachers who have used their own free time to help me in so many ways. For example, Miss Wright, the wonderful Oxbridge application advisor and beloved classics teacher who gave up hours to go over my personal statement, reference and interview skills. Or Dr Rickard and Mrs Brown who marked my many last-minute



Georgie (third left), a key member of the School Netball team

James's reflections on his time at Woodbridge can be read via this code



THE CLASS OF 2025

With the end of another academic year, we add another cohort to the OWs

Phoebe Adams	2018-2025	Burwell House
Henry Allen	2014-2025	Willard House
Sebastian Anderson	2018-2025	Annott House
Alina Anisimova	2023-2025	Willard House/School House
Mobolaji Bakare	2023-2025	Seckford House/School House
Oliver Baker	2018-2025	Seckford House
Ranadeep Banerjee	2023-2025	Willard House
Amelie Barrow	2019-2025	Seckford House
Isabella Barrow	2019-2025	Seckford House
Bruce Bennett	2018-2025	Annott House
Oscar Benton	2020-2025	Seckford House
Toby Clarke	2018-2025	Seckford House
Amelia Clayton	2023-2025	Annott House
Finlay Clench	2016-2025	Willard House
Edward Crouch Carter	2011-2025	Burwell House
Abigail Debrah	2018-2025	Annott House
Luca di Paola	2020-2025	Willard House
Samson Fayers	2018-2025	Annott House
Imogen Fenn	2018-2025	Willard House
Iwan Fothergill	2023-2025	Seckford House
Kris Ge	2023-2025	Seckford House/School House
Nick Geng	2023-2025	Annott House/School House
Henry Hartshorn	2020-2025	Annott House/School House
Charlotte Hattan	2011-2025	Seckford House
James Hattan	2011-2025	Seckford House
Millie Hayward	2023-2025	Burwell House
Daisy Hester	2023-2025	Annott House
Oscar Hibbert	2015-2025	Burwell House
Toby Hill	2011-2025	Annott House
Charlotte Hodge	2023-2025	Seckford House
Aidan Holliday	2011-2025	Seckford House
Rosie Hunter Blair	2011-2025	Willard House
Charlie Hutchinson	2018-2025	Seckford House
Millie Johnson	2016-2025	Annott House
Sergei Korshunov	2023-2025	Burwell House/School House
Freya Lidstone	2018-2025	Annott House
Ariana Lloyd	2018-2025	Willard House
Hugh Macaulay	2018-2025	Annott House
Rose McBride	2018-2025	Willard House
Jack McKenzie	2015-2025	Annott House
Alfie Meades	2018-2025	Burwell House
Amelia Moreton	2017-2025	Willard House
Bee Morton-Wright	2015-2025	Burwell House
Artem Nemyrushchy	2023-2025	Annott House/School House
Edward O'Toole	2023-2025	Seckford House
Ewan Page	2021-2025	Annott House
Georgina Phillips	2012-2025	Willard House
Marina Pommier	2011-2025	Burwell House
Charlotte Price	2018-2025	Seckford House
Harrison Putt	2020-2025	Burwell House
Ethan Rattenbury	2018-2025	Seckford House



The Class of 2024

Alexander Ridge	2018-2025	Willard House
Eloise Rufford	2018-2025	Burwell House
Finlay Saunders	2016-2025	Willard House
Harvey Sayles	2023-2025	Willard House
Alex Seaden	2018-2025	Annott House
Olivia Sims	2018-2025	Willard House
Violetta Smith	2018-2025	Burwell House
Jack Travers	2018-2025	Burwell House
Havannah Vincent	2023-2025	Willard House
Jonjo Walker	2011-2025	Annott House
Sophia Waterer	2011-2025	Seckford House
Lola Watts	2024-2025	Annott House
Oscar White	2018-2025	Willard House
Tolly Young	2017-2025	Seckford House

Teaching Staff leavers:

Stephen Bambridge	2023-2025
Matt Davis	2000-2025
Ben Edwards	1996-2025
Jamie Gage	2022-2025
Richard Pineo (OW)	2019-2025
Stuart Richardson	2004-2025
Emily Tattoo	2011-2025

JUST VISITING

Our doors are always open for OWs who want to visit, whatever their reason.

As you've seen, we welcome OWs back to Woodbridge in all sorts of different ways: at special events, to talk to our students as part of our careers programme, as guests of honour at Speech Day, to inspect the troops at the CCF AGI. Then there are those who simply want to pop in and take a trip down memory lane while seeing how the school is today. Each year a number of OWs visit in this way and 2024/2025 was no exception.

Early in the academic year Richard Pineo and I welcomed **Jo Sumner** (1989-1996) for a tour of School House – Jo tells her own story for us. Also in September **Chris Aust** (1960-1967) visited with his wife Margaret. Chris and his brother were day boys during the 1960s and Chris has this to say about his life after Woodbridge:



'I went to the University of York to study Physics, where I met my wife Margaret, who was doing Physics and Education. After completing a DPhil in Astrophysics and a couple of years on a Post Doctoral Fellowship, I decided

it was time to return to Earth and get a proper job. This took me to Aberdeen, where I was a Lecturer in the School of Physics at RGIT, now The Robert Gordon University. I later transferred to The School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering as a Senior Lecturer. I was offered early retirement 17 years ago, and Margaret retired two years later, but we enjoy our life in Aberdeen so have opted to stay.'

Chris and Margaret travelled to the south coast for a family wedding and took the opportunity to break the journey in Suffolk and visit us.

October saw Richard and I on another School House tour with **Richard Huntley**, who has put pen to paper for us, and a visit from **Peter Treadwell** (1951-1956) with his son. Peter was opening batter and bowler for the First XI in his final two years and was thrilled to see an old team photo and also the Pavilion, which as we know, is dear to many OWs.



Back row, Left to right: Hayward Gregory Heather Palmer Kennedy Imison Wilson
Front row, Left to right: Treadwell Yallop Harvey (capt.) Alston, N. W. Foster,

Peter Treadwell and the Woodbridge School First XI 1956

JO SUMNER (NÉE HUDSON) QUEEN'S HOUSE/SCHOOL HOUSE, 1989-1996

My brother (Stephen Hudson) arrived at Woodbridge in 1986, three years before me. He told our parents that everyone at senior school had a briefcase and so I was packed off with one as well. Despite the swift realisation everyone definitely did **not** have a briefcase and hurriedly replacing it with a slightly less embarrassing bag, the associated stigma still haunts me to this day!

If I'm honest, I didn't enjoy boarding school, mainly as I hated being away from home. Weekends meant Saturday school, chapel on a Sunday and, even if lucky and close enough to have escaped home for 24 hours, Sunday night meant 'back to school' and a visceral sinking feeling as the car turned into Burkitt Road...

Briefcases and homesickness aside, when my fiancé (James) and I went to Aldeburgh for a holiday last year, I decided it was time to revisit. The sun was shining as we were logged onto the system at Maryott House reception – neither the technology nor the reception

area existed back in my day – and I hoped to show James around and also perhaps lay a few demons to rest.

Like many others from military families, boarding school was a pretty standard route to allow my father to pursue his career as a fast-jet fighter pilot in the RAF, and my mother to dutifully move with him around the UK every couple of years. As an aside, I'm sure it was Dad's influence which led me to put up with the less popular RAF cadet uniform (rather than the Army one, noting there was no Navy CCF section in those days) for the chance to fly in Chipmunks then Bulldogs, and to complete my basic glider training. It must have stayed with me as my Civil Service career (I've worked for the Ministry of Defence for the last 23 years) has latterly led me to work alongside the RAF at its Air Command headquarters.

Looking back now, the "hating school" mantra was further heightened by partial deafness (this was before the days of digital hearing aids capable of helping my unusual pattern of loss) and it felt



Jo on the steps of School House September 2024

worse when compounded by the inevitable teenage drama (including a couple of terms of silent treatment) that came from living in a dormitory of seven teenage girls. However, I suspect I am not the only one whose boarding school trauma has kept many a therapist in business over the years!

Of course, school wasn't all bad. I have some equally fond memories of my time at Woodbridge: Lucy Fryer (née James) and I were two of only three people in our year who failed the audition to get into the junior choir. The choir practiced at lunchtime, so we became best friends, and we still are today – I have Woodbridge School to thank for that. Equally, on moving from Queen's House to School House in the fourth year, we were all lucky enough to have the legendary Mr and Mrs Saunders as housemaster and mistress. The impact of their pastoral care and kindness over the years has stayed with me.

Sam was incredibly generous with her time and showed us all around the school and grounds as well as arranging a special tour of the boarding house, for



Jo with Lucy Fryer at an RAF Ball silent disco 2019

JUST VISITING

which I am very grateful, and I couldn't help but feel incredibly welcome as part of the Old Woodbridgian community. School House was very different and yet somehow still the same – these days carpets may hug the stone stairwells, and the payphone and letter rack have long since been consigned to history, but somehow there was still an echo of the old days just under the surface. I could almost still hear the daily roll call being called but most shocking was that everyone

was now allowed to use the front door whereas that was a privilege reserved for senior pupils only in my time!

Back to the school itself – the majority of teachers from my time have moved on, retired, or more sadly, passed away (Miss Dewhurst, Mr Leslie, Mr Weaver to name but a few). However, we did bump into Miss Gill (slightly embarrassing as I had given up geography in favour of history and Mike Weaver's tie collection as soon as I had the option,

around the same time as I gave up Latin!) and timing meant I unfortunately missed seeing Miss Richardson (who taught me A level German in her early teaching days at Woodbridge).

In hindsight, I feel privileged to have had the opportunities the school provided. The facilities have improved even more given it now boasts its own theatre, for example. Yet conversely some things remained eerily familiar – glancing at the science block toilets as we passed, I was transported to memories of them inexplicably featuring in recurring dreams of mine over the years (and no, I have no idea why either!).

For me, thinking about the town of Woodbridge was once synonymous with feeling sad and missing home, but if circumstances dictated, I would now happily live there and call it home. Visiting certainly went some way to laying the childhood demons to rest – the feelings on turning into Burkitt Road didn't quite hit the same when going back voluntarily.



Jo with School House boarders in the mid 1990s

RICHARD HUNTLEY THE ABBEY/TALLENTS HOUSE/SCHOOL HOUSE, 1971-81

It was with a mixture of excitement and trepidation that I visited Sam and her wonderful team in 2024 nearly 40 years since my last visit.

I was armed with my old tuck box filled with old photographs and school reports and supported by my son William, who was curious to see the place that had shaped his father.

It was a great day where I had the chance to see both School House and the Abbey and share

some of my memories with both my son and the staff who, bless them, tried to look interested throughout. They made the whole day very special.

It was a mixture of the familiar and the new and it's good to see how the school has evolved, blending tradition with progress

The Abbey: Initially flummoxed by 'meet at the bottom gate' – a new addition since my time – I was able to share memories

with many team photos and school reports. Apparently, I was a noisy child (some things don't change) who, if I spent as much time concentrating on class work as sport, might amount to something. William was amazed at how frank school reports were in the early 1970s.

Memories of Tom Dewar and his famous football matches where the school team would take on the rest, with two

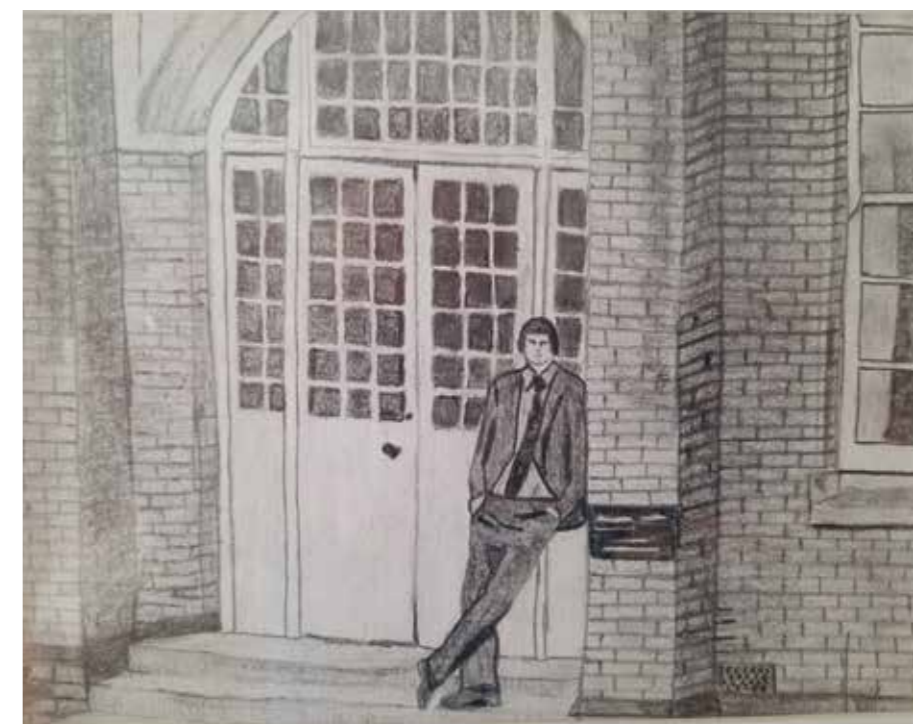
footballs and a rugby ball sprawled across two pitches, and the rest being allowed three goalkeepers, came to mind.

The five boys-only dorms of Broome, Bingham, Wingfield, Seckford and North have certainly changed!

Senior School: After two years at Tallents House under the nurturing care of the Lubbocks I was lucky enough to join School House for Desmond Proctor-Robinson's final year and stay boarding there until I left. Ours was the first year to have girls and in hindsight I have great admiration for those pioneers.

I remember watching Top of the Pops in the attic TV room during Prep to hear footsteps on the stairs. I walked Mike Boothroyd, the housemaster, with parents of a prospective pupil. He said something along the lines of '...and here is the TV room... with some prefects watching Top of the Pops when they should be doing prep whom I'll be speaking to later....' then calmly shut the door and carried on his tour.

I played cricket for Deben Valley & OWs from the age of



Pencil drawing of Richard Huntley outside School House

14 and we were lucky enough to use the school First XI pitch for home matches. I was able to show copies of the signed programme when we played the Essex XI (county champions) as part of Ken McEwan's Benefit season in 1984. The opposing team included many England players including Graham Gooch. We were quite star struck.

After school I spent nearly 40 years in banking (please

don't hold that against me) travelling around England and ending up in Cheshire before retiring. I've been married to Tracey for nearly 35 years and we have one son, William.

Woodbridge School instilled many values in me that hopefully came to the fore in later life. I know I wouldn't have got the exams and grades which set me up for a good life without being at Woodbridge.

It is always fascinating to meet the families of OWs. Many bring their partners or children back to their old school and I think they always find it interesting to see the place that was formative in their relative's upbringing (many are jealous when they see our beautiful grounds). Caroline Ogilvie visited in March and shared vivid memories of driving down the drive to collect her brother

from School House at the end of each term. Her brother **Peter Howard Smith** (1958-1966) boarded from 1962-1966, following in the Woodbridge School footsteps of their father, **Leslie Howard Smith** (1914-1916).

OWs like to keep us on our toes. No visits for a couple of months and then on June 17 two popped into the Prep unannounced on the same day! What are the chances? I was wearing my other

Woodbridge School hat and was busy with A Level Physics and GCSE Spanish so am very grateful to my colleagues Emma and Karen for looking after **Bimal Patel** (1975-1984) and **Ian Bateman** (1970-1980) on my behalf.

At the time of writing, I am looking forward to meeting **James Whittingham** (1993-1996) and **John Hoyte** (1969-1972) next week. Perhaps their stories will appear in Just Visiting next year.

FROM THE OW OFFICE

The opportunity of friendship

At two OW celebrations this year when I had to give my dreaded speeches, I spoke about two things Woodbridge School has not only given me but has also given to everyone present: friendship and opportunities. At each event there was an evident and perfect representation of lifelong friendships which began at Woodbridge. At both events the Heads of School were present which gave me hope that in 50 years they will be attending reunions and celebrating friendships formed here in the same way. I know they agree that Woodbridge School has given them a huge range of opportunities while they have been students here, and I imagine many OWs would not be where there are today had they not been able to grasp the opportunities a Woodbridge education made available to them.

I've been here for eight years and have made some wonderful friends who will be friends for life. I have also been given the opportunity to grow and develop professionally. I began as a very part-time assistant to the Director of

Development. Having taken on more responsibility for the OWs whilst also becoming an invigilator and assisting in the exams office, I am now officially combining Alumni Officer with Exams Officer, a strange and possibly unique hybrid but one which I think I'm making work and which I am really enjoying.

This year has been one of incredible highs and a devastating low for the wider Woodbridge School community. The strength of friendships within our community has been vitally important across these highs and lows.

As you've seen, the year began on the most incredible high with the fabulous celebration marking Fifty Years of Girls. The involvement of an increasing number of OWs in our careers programme is surely something to celebrate. In every page of this magazine the strength of friendships formed here sings out and long may that remain the case. Those friendships are definitely worth celebrating. I am blessed with OWs who write well and are keen to write about their time here and where they are now – always reflecting on the



importance of the friendships and the opportunities Woodbridge gave them.

Since I joined Woodbridge School in 2017, I have always shared an office with the Examinations Officer. An odd combination, brought about more because of where there was available desk space than anything else. Indeed, it was only this year that I finally got a new sign for the office door which actually reflects what I do rather than saying "Data Administration" which referred to a previous inhabitant of



my desk. Starting a new job is daunting enough, moving into a shared office with people on a different team to me was something I hadn't experienced before, and I remember being more nervous than anticipated on my first day. I needn't have worried. If there is one thing Woodbridge excels at it is friendship. Three people have sat at the Exams Officers' desk in my time and each one has become a valued colleague and, more importantly a valued friend.

Two weeks after the incredible 50 Years of Girls event I was asked to step up from Assistant Exams Officer to Acting Exams Officer. Adam and I spoke but I wasn't to see him again. I shared an office with Adam for four years and worked extremely closely with him in exams. I hope I've done him proud stepping into his shoes for this year's exams; it has been a huge learning curve. Adam left everything in such a way that it was easy to take over from him but, on the other hand, he had a very unique and brilliant brain and for someone on not quite such a high intellectual plane,



At the OW Half Century Club Lunch 2025

I have sometimes struggled to work out quite how he did things.

I learnt more about him at his memorial than in the preceding four years, only learning at this service that he and his wife Polly loved to watch MasterChef, as do my husband and I. Now I can only imagine the conversations we could have had. I wish I'd known him better but am glad to have known him. I miss the gorgeous photo of his son Henry on his desk. Adam was a very private man, but you could tell he adored Henry, and

I will always remember when he showed me a photo of Henry's first day at school.

Over the summer there are to be some changes in accommodation in Marryott House and when I return in September it will be to a new office (taking my sign with me) which I will have to myself. That's going to feel a bit odd but I know the friends I have at Woodbridge will support me along the way so I can fully realise the opportunities which have been offered to me.

Sam James



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My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this magazine but also to those OWs who have been involved in the life of the school this last year. As ever there are too many individuals to mention but particular thanks to: Matt Bowden, Tim Cook, Stephen and Jane Cole, James Hattan, Ann Hirst, Rick Hobson, Richard Huntley, Naomi James, David Kemsley, Robert Lightfoot, Olivia McBride, Rose McBride, Nicola Mitchell, Shona Norman, Imy O'Brien, Florence Paul, Graham Peck, Georgie Phillips, Sylvaine Poitau, Tim Ripman, Roisin Ryan-Self, Jo Sumner, Anna York-Weaving

Centre photo: School House taken on the day of the OW Half Century Club Lunch (Sylvaine Poitau)



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