The Old Coventrian

The newsletter of the King Henry VIII School former pupils association March 2026 Issue 44

Message From Your OCA Chair: Katie Chung

There is something about this time of year that makes even a short walk past the school grounds feel like a small gift.

This past week I found myself passing by on several occasions while waiting to pick up my daughter and each time I stopped a moment longer than intended. I was not alone: one of the local Earlsdon residents paused alongside me and remarked how lovely it was to see the children out and having fun. The grounds were waking up - groundsmen out with their mowers, the much-revered cricket square being carefully rolled and flattened, the whole place carrying that particular scent and energy that belongs only to spring.

Perhaps it was simply a sunny day at the end of a long, wet winter. But it felt like more than that.
On one of those walks I caught sight of the junior school children out in the field, deep in a lesson among the trees and open air, with faint strains of music drifting across from the music block.

Taking it all in, it struck me how much the field has always been - and remains - a genuine asset to this school. Its keepers, the groundsmen, are the unsung heroes who make it beautiful and ready for whatever comes next.

Because the field is, in many ways, where a great deal of school life actually happened. Conversations sitting on the grass - if we were allowed on it at lunchtime - or sprawled on the high jump mats if we thought we could get away with it. Sports days and cross country, glorious ones and rather soggy ones. The crack of a cricket bat on a summer afternoon. Rounders along the tree-lined edges, discus thrown from the far corner. And in winter, the mud of a rugby or hockey fixture.

If you went to this school, the field likely features in some of your most vivid recollections - a triumph, a tumble, a conversation with a friend on the way back in. It is heartening to know that the children there now

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Message From Rich Sewell Headmaster and OCA President

As ever, life at Henry's moves with the same rapid pace and purpose that many Old Coventrians will remember from their own school days. The spring term may be shorter, but it has lost none of the bustling enthusiasm, friendly competition and quiet determination that have long defined the school. That enduring Henry's spirit is as alive now as it ever was.

We have enjoyed a wide range of events that many OCs will be familiar with, as well as some that may be new to you, including House Cross Country, our annual Iftar Meal, Mock Trial Evening, Cookery Master Class, EPQ Presentation Evening, Year 7 Pancake Race, mock examinations, Scholarship Interviews, the Royal Society of Chemistry National Competition, our ongoing biology research partnership with Warwick University, and, of course, House Drama.

Many of you will remember the Spring Concert as a highlight of the school year — the long evenings of practice, the nerves backstage, and the unforgettable feeling of performing as part of something bigger. This term, we held our Spring Concert in the Butterworth Hall at Warwick Arts Centre for fourth time. Few schools could fill a space of that scale with such confidence and talent — but Henry's can. It was a glorious celebration of our pupils' musicianship and of the collaborative ethos that defines Henry's music. Nowhere was this more evident than in the finale: a massed choir bringing together singers from Year 3 through to the Upper Sixth, supported by our superb senior school musicians as they performed a flawless *Les Misérables* medley.

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are busy accumulating the very same kind of memories.

Spring, it seems, is the perfect moment to remember all of this. And to look forward.

Katie Chung
OCA Chair

First Girls' Reunion

Saturday 25 April 2026
Celebrating 50 years of co-education

Preparations are well under way for the reunion which will gather the first girls who joined the Junior and Senior School in 1975 when it became coeducational, and those who joined the Fifth & Sixth Form in 1976.·

Over 30 first girls have already confirmed they are coming.

Several former teachers will also be there and look forward to catching up with you all!

There is still time to RSVP if you haven't already done so: Alumni@csfoundation.org.uk. Partners welcome.

Saturday 25 April 2026

Burgess Hall, King Henry VIII School, Coventry 2.30pm-5.30pm (+ organise your own celebrations in town afterwards)

Refreshments

School tour

50 for 50 Exhibition

Memories, and more...

(Continued from page 1)

For those of a sporting nature, you will be pleased to know that the King Henry VIII National Cross Country Relay Race continues to thrive. This year, 63 boys' teams and 44 girls' teams — more than 550 young athletes in total — braved a largely bright day, though with heavy underfoot conditions, to race around the multi-terrain 2.3-mile course within the War Memorial Park. It was, as ever, an extraordinary celebration of sport, determination and camaraderie. The fastest time this year was 10:57 — an excellent achievement given the soft ground. You can read this year's article and view event photographs in Athletics Weekly.

On the penultimate day of term, our First VII netballers faced a tall and athletic Bablake team. Following a confident and convincing win by the Under 13s in the curtain-raiser, the senior match was fiercely contested from start to finish, and although the final score did not do justice to the determination and spirit shown by our players, they remained gracious in defeat. Their resilience and teamwork were genuinely appreciated by all who watched.

As part of the school's evolution, many of you will know that robotics was introduced only a few years ago, and it has rapidly become one of Henry's many success stories. This year, we sent a staggering seven teams to the VEX Robotics Competition National Finals, and we are enormously proud to say that this marks our fourth national title in four years. It is quite an achievement for the school to send seven teams to the national finals, and a testament to the dedication of both pupils and staff.

Next week, I will be joining Year 10 in the Shropshire Hills for their Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award practice expedition. Although I won't be carrying a full pack, I will be there — alongside colleagues — to offer support and encouragement as pupils take on the challenge. Meanwhile, our Lower Sixth will be embarking on their five-day Gold DofE practice expedition in the Lake District. We wish all the groups fair weather, strong spirits and the sense of achievement that comes from taking on something truly demanding.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that at the start of the term we lost a much-loved member of the Henry's community, Mr Phil Bond, Head of Religious Studies and possibly one of the most passionate Heads of Hales House. Although not all OCs will have known him, the warmth and sincerity of the tributes shared at his Celebration of Life spoke volumes. Colleagues, former pupils and family gathered to honour a dedicated teacher, and it was a privilege for the school to come together in gratitude for his kindness, service and lasting impact.

With best wishes to all Old Coventrians, and my thanks for your continued support of the Henry's community,

Rich Sewell
Headmaster

Old Coventrian Spotlight

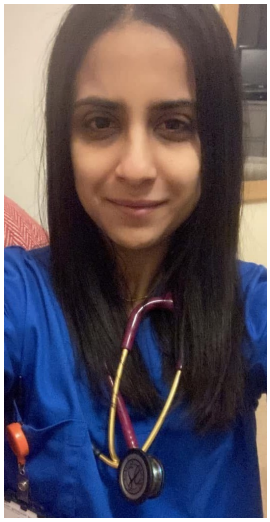
Aoife Anson O'Connell

(Class of 2012)

Aoife and her band Westside Cowboy (pictured righ) just keep rising. Having recently played in the USA and Europe, they are currently playing sold-out dates across the UK. A current member of staff (and former one!) saw them recently in the packed Bodega in Nottingham and were blown away by their self-styled 'Britannica' indie-rock sound. Aoife's wonderful vocals are featured increasingly, along with her naturally talented bass playing. The band have just released their third EP and the two staff loved getting their copy signed in person!

Give Westside Cowboy a listen on your favourite streaming platform and keep an eye out for upcoming live dates. If you manage to grab tickets, you will quickly see why they have captured the hearts of so many music fans with their dynamic, passionate performances.

Sarah Zurub (Class of 2006)



To mark 10 years of recovery from anorexia, Sarah (pictured, right) will be trekking the Great Wall of China in October 2026 to raise funds for Beat, the UK's eati
ng disorder charity.

Sarah has already raised over £1,350 towards her £4,000 goal and would be so grateful if we could support her journey.

She says: "Henry's were so supportive during my illness, and it would be lovely to all work together for such an amazing cause and say thank you."

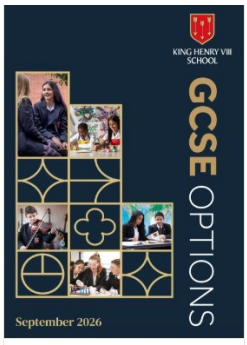
To donate and support her challenge, go to: https://www.justgiving.com/page/sarah-zurub-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&fbclid=IwY2xjawQoyo1leHRuA2FlbQIxMABzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeKSlCledBiV3bq8uLN0fUB3jUyzbdrF4IQqEY2ItGbZ74EmF8AUQYBz6t-VU_aem_pvrxW6ylAoTzHx1Ozol8qw

We would love to hear from you!

Share news and photos of your adventures, life moments, successes (e.g. travel, raising money for a charity, wedding, voluntary work, why you like the work you do, etc) and we will feature them in the Old Coventrian newsletters.
Email: alumni@csfoundation.org.uk

Want to keep up with what is happening at Henry's?

You can view school publications online at:
https://kinghenrys.co.uk/media/publications/



GCSE Options Booklet

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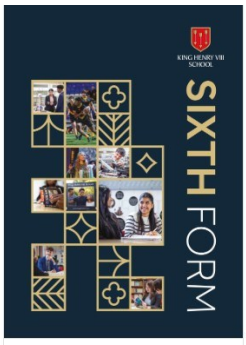

Sixth Form Prospectus

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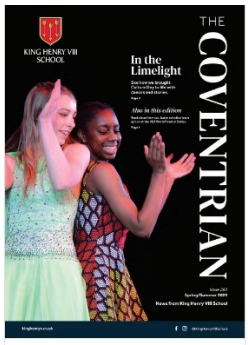

The Coventrian – Spring/Summer 2025

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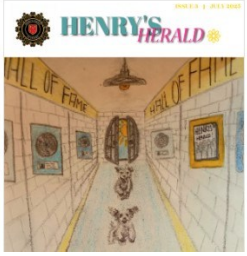

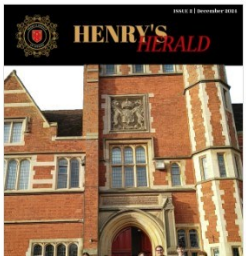

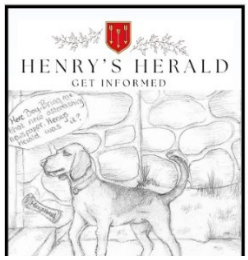

Henry's Come Dancing Makes Spectacular Debut

King Henry VIII School was delighted to host the inaugural Henry's Come Dancing, a sell-out event that transformed the school hall into a vibrant ballroom for an unforgettable evening of entertainment, community spirit and fundraising.

Following months of rehearsals, staff contestants took to the dance floor to perform a range of styles including the Waltz, Samba and Cha Cha Cha. The performances were met with enthusiastic applause and cheers from a packed audience of students, families and staff, who fully embraced the celebratory atmosphere of the night.

The success of the event was driven in no small part

by Lauren, Upper Sixth student and ballroom dancer, who choreographed and coached all of the routines. Balancing her role as Head of School alongside her academic commitments, Lauren demonstrated exceptional leadership, patience and dedication, with the confidence and polish of each performance reflecting her expertise and commitment.

The competition proved to be extremely close, with the judges unable to separate the top contenders. As

a result, a tense and exciting dance-off was required to split the votes, creating a dramatic highlight of the evening. Following a rousing drum roll, Mr Owen and Mr Raffle were announced as the inaugural winners of Henry's Come Dancing, receiving rapturous applause from the audience.

Beyond the entertainment, the event proudly supported Zoe's Place Baby Hospice, a charity providing vital care and support for babies and young children with complex needs and their families. The generosity shown by attendees and supporters reflected the strong sense of community at King Henry VIII School and contributed to the charity's essential work. The total sum raised was **£5,744.15.**

The School is immensely proud of the success of Henry's Come Dancing and the collective effort that made the evening such a memorable occasion. The School looks forward to building on this success and hopes the event will become a much-loved fixture in the school calendar.

Photos: top left: Mr. Womble and Miss Harrison; top right: Mr Newton and Mrs Kaczur; bottom left: Mr Miles and Mrs Codona-Smith; bottom right: Mr Owen and Mr Raffle (winners)

An Invitation

You will all be aware of the special 50th anniversary that King Henry's is celebrating this year. Fewer may know that it is also 50 years since the expedition in the summer of 1976, and in the yellow and blue minibuses, across Europe to visit the classical sites of Greece and Italy. The venture was inspired by and led by Rod Dunnett, along with Peter Lockyer, Alan Mees, Simon Whiteley and myself. It was a truly memorable adventure in so many wonderful ways.

Were you a part of that adventure? Are you in touch with others who were with us? Would you like to meet up with them again to relive and share your memories? Why not book a table together at the OCA's Annual Dinner on Saturday 14 November? Or come on your own, or with a friend or partner, and see who else is there?

Above, Alan Mees (staff) with Ian Peters (on step) and Michael Curtis (on ground) load the minibus

Left, Neil 'Flash' Flannagan, Simon Whiteley (staff), Simon 'Stan' Cookson, Michael Walton and David Barker.

It also happens to be the 40th, 35th and 30th anniversaries of the School trips that I took to Greece with my wife Pam and various other members of staff in 1986, 1991 and 1996. (There were also Greek trips in 1989 and 2002).

Were you one of the participants in those trips? Do you remember who the staff and pupils were who were your fellow travellers? Are you still in touch with any of them? Why don't you too get a group together and book a table at the OCA's Annual Dinner in November to meet up and share your memories?

Details of how to book individually or book a table are shown elsewhere in this newsletter.

It would be lovely to see you there. Alternatively, if you can't make it, why not send us your reminiscences?

Jeremy Thomas

Meet the Development Team

The Development Team is dedicated to keeping the OCA community connected and supporting the growth of our school. At the heart of the team is **Catherine Kaye, Alumni Relations Officer**, who has been building relationships with alumni since March 2020. Catherine's role is all about staying in touch, fostering links between the OCA and the school and welcoming alumni back through reunions, dinners, exhibitions, sports events and tours.

Meanwhile, **Andrea Lawson, Head of Development**, brings over 34 years of experience in marketing and development across education, professional services and finance. Andrea focuses on strengthening alumni engagement, creating long-term stakeholder relationships, and developing strategies that align the school's values with growth objectives.

Together, Catherine and Andrea work to ensure that our alumni community continues to thrive and that alumni feel engaged, supported and part of the ongoing story of King Henry VIII.

Catherine (left) and Andrea

Donald Mather (Class of 1948) 1936-2026

Don Mather was a pupil of King Henry VIII School in the late 1940s and early 1950s, His professional life was in the field of engineering, where he worked for GEC from 1962 and where his contemporaries held him in high regard.

Fellow-musician Ivor Lee told us "He came to help our band on a few occasions - our Coventry School of Dance Music which fellow GEC apprentices had started in 1960/61. We had no idea how to get organised; Cyril Narbeth ex big band musician and a few young modernist and better musicians came to help as well as Don."

Don was highly regarded on the big band scene, where as well as being a highly respected clarinettist and tenor saxophonist, he led his own bands over several decades, including Don's Atomic Big Band, a 20-piece orchestra, Miller Men and The Don Maher Big Band**.** He also formed a Quintet and a Quartet. He played with some greats of the jazz world and was known locally, nationally and internationally, including several years living in Spain.

Don was Chairman of the Coventry Jazz Festival Committee for five years, with his wife Maureen also serving on the committee. During this time the festival became a big player on the jazz scene. He was also a member of the Musicians Union and sat on the MU's Coventry Branch Committee.

For those eager to find out about Don's music, there are several clips of Don leading his various bands on YouTube

Don's funeral took place on 16 February at Canley Crematorium.

Robert Wood (Class of 1955) 1944-2025

Robert George Wood was born at 22 Mulberry Road, Court House Green, Coventry on 25 May 1944. He was the only child of Robert and Mabel Wood and spent his childhood days at both Mulberry Road and then Attwood Cresent in Wyken.

Rob was extremely proud of attending King Henry VIII School and often spoke about how academically it set him up for life. He thoroughly enjoyed the sporting aspect of the school particularly basketball and cricket. He held the highest batting score in his year group and scored 58 not out against Stourbridge Grammar school which, again, he was very proud of.

In his 20's Rob enjoyed football and played for Meadway Rovers and represented the Coventry District side. Rob was an extremely talented angler and would fish for Broadstreet, organising their fishing calendar. His biggest achievement was winning the Billy Lane Coventry Championships at Coombe Abbey.

Rob's school reports made great reading. It appeared he initially found the transition into King Henry VIII challenging and was towards the bottom of the classes to start with, but with his determination, by the time he left he had progressed into the top half of the class and towards the top in some subjects.

Rob's first job was working with his dad at the Coventry Dairy. He loved working there, often going out on milk rounds or helping his dad with dairy duties.

Following school Rob secured an apprenticeship at Speedright Gauge and Tool. He did his apprenticeship there and became a toolmaker and a Freeman of the City of Coventry. Following his time at Speedright Rob moved to another Coventry company called European Gauges before finally retiring at age 70.

Rob met his wife Jean at a dance night at Ansty Club and the two of them began courting from there. It was the beginning of a loving relationship that would last for over 55 years.

On 9 September 1967 Rob married Jean in a lovely white wedding at Foleshill Parish Church followed by a reception at The Craftsman. After ten years of marriage Jean and Rob were thrilled to welcome their son Robbie into the world.

In later years Rob really valued the quality time he spent with Robbie at various sporting events and holidays. They went to Wembley to watch Coventry City FC and to watch England against Spain. They also shared some great days at Twickenham watching England play rugby and enjoyed trips to Edgbaston to watch the England cricket team.

Rob also loved his holidays with Jean and following his retirement enjoyed time in Bermuda, Cuba and a visit to Niagara Falls as well as many European holidays.

Rob was a loving husband and father, but his most cherished role was as a grandad. He was a family man and always ready to help anyone. Rob really appreciated the simple things in life like spending time with his loved ones or simply pottering in his garden or garage.

Sadly, Rob closed his eyes for the last time on 9 December 2025. Although devastated at saying goodbye to him, those closest to Rob know just how lucky they were to have had him as part of their lives.

Bob Wood

Rob and Jean, with their son Bob at the rear

Steven Henry Wood (Class of 1965) May 1954 - November 2025

Steven was born in May 1954 in Coventry and was the much-loved son of Rose and Roy Wood. He was joined 3 years later by his cherished sister Nadine. Both Nadine and his mum, who is now 93, continue to live close by to Coventry. He was always very extremely grateful for his warm and loving family and stayed close to Nadine's husband Tony, his goddaughter Kate with her husband Nick, and his nephew Matthew too.

His exceptional abilities shone through from an early age with him achieving a free scholarship to attend King Henry VIII. He always enjoyed a huge spectrum of diverse interests with endless curiosity, enjoyment and ease. These ranged from him being an avid reader to enjoying individual and team sports. He was highly numerate but also excelled in English having a natural flare with words. He was fascinated by the vast world around as well as delving into prehistoric times. King Henry VIII School opened up a whole new chapter and vista in his life which he was for ever grateful.

After King Henry VIII he studied Civil Engineering at London City University sponsored by George Wimpey. This gave him the foundations for a successful and rewarding national and international career in construction, town planning, property development as well as his deep-seated knowledge and interest in London. Not long after finishing university he met his wife Valerie in Chiswick, London. in 1978. They were married 18 months later in her home village just outside Edinburgh. Steven's love for life and huge number of interests enriched her life for ever too.

Steven only ever knew one pace, and it was fast! He was hugely proud and influenced by his early years in Coventry. This prompted his enthusiasm for motorbikes, fast cars, motor sports with his ultimate joy being the proud owner of an Aston Martin. Valerie and he toured all over Europe for many years finding intriguing and different places to stay so they could enjoy the local culture and cuisine. They were also very fortunate to be able to enjoy extensive and unusual long-haul travel with the "piece de resistance" being a Harley Davidson trip over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Success in his professional and business life were very important to him. During his career spanning more than 40 years he was dedicated to making an impact through his work, leaving a legacy and giving consideration to society and communities. He had unending determination, resilience, pragmatism and optimism which also propelled him through his 13 years cancer fight. His bravery and fortitude were boundless.

Early in his career he had an amazing opportunity to work in Aquaba in Jordan to build a huge container port and refurbish King Hussein's palace. During his 2-3 years there he developed a never needing interest in the history and current affairs of the Middle East.

Steven and Valerie

Over time he moved on from construction into property development and was involved in many major London landmark projects such as Little Britain which at the time was one of the most highly specified projects ever built in the City of London; Stratford development which became the Olympic Park; White City Shopping centre which is now Westfield London Shopping centre and the development of Spitalfields in the East End. He was made a Freeman of the City of London in recognition.

His interest in the Middle East took him to Kurdistan on a groundbreaking project to create a Kurdish national museum. It was designed to create a truly significant and symbolic experience for a reflection on the past and give hope for the future. Here he worked with the world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind who designed the One World Trade Centre which is the centrepiece of the rebuilt World Trade Centre after 9/11.

Later he applied his energy and expertise to leadership roles in Charities, Planning Committees, Resident societies and other local organisations to make an impact at the community level.

Steven and Valerie moved from Surrey to be near to the coast in the New Forest, Hampshire, in 2023 and loved sharing the new home project together. They developed an interest in local artists and enjoyed visits to The Rothschild Pallaises des Vaches gallery at Exbury. They also rekindled their love of opera during London trips. Steven's fondness for Coventry always stayed with him and his passion for Coventry City Football Club never wavered. Not even through some of its bleakest moments of which there have been many!

Jeremy Cooke (Class of 1975)

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Jeremy Cooke.

Jez went on from KHVIII to study mechanical engineering at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) and spent his working life in Dorset working for the MoD in its various guises and more recently for Leonardo (formerly Augusta Westland) in Yeovil, Somerset. He leaves three children, Nicholas, Annabel and Hannah.

It was not long ago that Jez, who was 62, attended the 100th Old Coventrians Dinner alongside brothers Richard (Class of 73) and Michael (Class of 80). Their father, Roy Cooke, was headmaster of KH8 and then Director of the Coventry Schools Foundation from 1974-1993.

Jez's funeral and farewell service was held at St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth on Friday 20th March, followed by a reception in the Church Rooms.

If anyone would like to make a charity donation in Jez's memory, in aid of Weldmar Hospicecare in

Dorchester and the British Heart Foundation, please follow the link below. Thank you.

https://jeremycooke.muchloved.com

Richard and Michael Cooke

John Gazey

(Class of 1944)

5 June 1933 - 20 December 2025

The OCA was saddened to hear of the death of John Gazey (pictured right), aged 92.

John was a former city councillor, representing Bablake ward for 26 years (apart from a 2 year hiatus 1996-98), and served as Lord Mayor in 2004-05.

He was the husband of the late Hazel and father of Nicholas Gazey and Rebecca Davidson, father-in-law to Robert Davidson. He had four grandchildren, Sebastian and Jacob Gazey, and Samuel and Alexander Davidson.

As well as his long service on Coventry City Council, John was a Freeman of the City of Coventry, a Freeman of the City of London, Vice President of the Scouts Association, a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH) and served in the Intelligence Corps from1955 to1957.

John's funeral took place at Canley Crematorium on 16 January 2026.

Donations can be made to Myton Hospices at:

https://funeral-notices.co.uk/donation?nid=5282461&tid=reach&dpid=178238&abid=902462117&np=%2Fnotice%2Fgazey%2F5282461&fn=John+Victor&sn=GAZEY
or via:

Heart Of England Co-operative Funerals
11 Lower Holyhead Road

My Last Marathon

Seeing the Marathon Ladder in *The Old Coventrian* almost makes me wish I was as obsessive about statistics and record keeping as most marathoners are so I could submit my best. I would belong somewhere in the top 40, most likely based on a Toronto or Ottawa marathon in the 1980s. But I got my start and love of running in my time at King Henry VIII.

Very shortly after I arrived at the school in 1961, it might have been within 15 minutes of my arrival,, Ted Norrish somehow identified me as a runner. And that was it. Two years on the school teams doing x-country and middle distance running. And we had a darn good x-country team in those years, thanks of course to Ted.

I was never a great marathoner – I always went out too fast and died coming home. But still, I was consistently a sub-four hour runner, generally in the 3:20-3:40 range; and for one lovely year, it looked like I might manage to break three hours. I really wanted to get a Boston Marathon qualifying time. That was not to be as my bad knees caught up to me at mile 17 of the Marine Corps marathon in Washington one year and after that DNF, I was forced to cut back drastically on training and racing.

In any event, a few years later I was in Ottawa just to cheer on some friends running the National Capital Marathon. But, I felt really good, and late registration was still open.

My running career was winding down; my knees would not stand up to it anymore after over 25 years of running with no cartilage, which had removed in operations while at in my early 20s..

John visiting Bang Pa In Palace in Ayutthaya last October.

I was down to running about 20km a week, no more than 5k on any given day along with the occasional 5k race, about one third of my previous training regimen and a sixth of what I used work up to for marathon training.

I thought that I'd just like to see what I could do. How far could I go? And, I'd like just one more marathon T-shirt. So I signed up even though I'd not done more than 5k on any day in the past six months. To be honest, I just did it for the T-shirt.

The Marine Corps Marathon at about the halfway point

Knowing the condition I was in, I lined up at the back to start. I had no intention of running fast and I did not want to be in anyone's way.

At the tail end of the starters, the mob is so thick and slow, you walk across the start line, and I was one of the very last across. As the crowd thinned out, I was able to get into a light jog, and it felt good. And I kept it light because I kept in mind I had not trained.
In any event I kept on jogging, and gradually picked up the pace, still feeling good, but watching carefully and expectantly for sufficient knee pain to force me to stop. It did not come and I kept gradually speeding up, knowingly forcing myself to stay well within my limits.

I hit the half marathon mark in just under 2 hours – nothing to be ashamed of, particularly after a walking start.

From that point on no-one passed me. I just kept reeling in the runners ahead. And I kept feeling good. I never pushed myself to the max – because I knew I had not trained – but on the other hand, I never stopped to walk, but was able ever so gradually to keep picking up the pace - and somehow I brought it home in about 3:30. No pain after the race, and none the day after.

I could have done with learning those lesson a couple of decades earlier:

1. Don't go out so damn fast – save something for the last 21km
2. You don't have to train so hard to do a marathon if you learn to run within your limits.

I never did try another marathon to test out those lessons. But to a degree, I apply them in life.

John Tyrrell

John Tyrrell attended King Henry VIII for sixth form 1961-1963. On leaving, he attended the Royal Military College of Canada and spent a 31 year career in the Canadian Armed Forces. He also has an MBA from Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. He currently lives in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. He no longer runs marathons or any other distance, but still hikes regularly.

Crackley Run 2025

The annual Crackley Run took place on the Saturday before Christmas, in excellent running conditions. Fourteen took part, including five newcomers. Times were fast, but despite the numbers, 2024's winners repeated their success. Ned Gilford retained the men's trophy in a time of 19:35, and Emma Garnett continued her series of successive victories in 26:09.

The House trophy (well, not a trophy, but a sense of satisfaction) went to Hales', with six runners, including second placed Adam Huxford (21:48) and a pack from 7th to 10th. Holland's fielded four runners,

White's and King's one apiece, but Sherwyn's were absent – the others were much-welcome guests. The mythical (or should this be legendary?) family trophy went to the Chapmans: Nev and Esme beating the Huxfords on combined times, by twenty seconds. The run was followed by a few mince pies and a lot of conversation, before the demands of Christmas shopping took over. Many thanks to those who ran, those who helped with the logistics – John Vickers, Pete Jones and Max Field – and even to those who promised that in 2026 they would join us!

Above, Peter Jones presents the women's trophy to Emma Garnett and above right, the men's trophy to Ned Gifford . Below, the whole group.

Hockey

The Dean Close women's hockey sixes tournament is scheduled for Sunday 12 April 2026.

Last year's tournament was twice postponed and finally cancelled completely.

A shortage of participating teams puts it at risk of cancellation again this year, but if it goes ahead the OCA will have a notably younger team than in previous years!

Any players interested can email Peter Huxford at:

ocsports@csfoundation.org.uk

House Newsletter

Our thanks to the KHVIII Heads of House for submitting this report.

This is not just any house system round up this is a King Henry VIII house system round up.

House Drama

What an event this year! We saw a range of different performances from our Houses including pupils from all year groups. Holland's graced us with a performance of Gnomeo and Juliet with energetic singing and performances. White's thundered onto the stage with an extract from Hercules, our very own Mr. Jones cameoing as Zeus and some beautiful vocals from the eponymous hero. Hales' took us all on a walk 'Into The Woods' with songs, fables and stories of wolves, ugly sisters and love lost. All the performances were excellent but the house that rose to the challenge was Sherwyns's with their show case of Matilda the Musical, demonstrating great organisation, participation and teamwork. There were beautiful vocal solos and ensemble singing not to mention some tense moments with Miss Trunchball and we cannot forget Bruce feverishly eating an entire chocolate cake onstage! Well, done Sherwyns's for the hattrick - three years of the House Drama trophy. Let the race for next year begin.

Swimming and Water Polo

In the pool, Hales'' have been Phelps-esque in their domination of the water, no doubt inspired by having Mr. Philips, Head of Swimming, as their interim House. In both Junior Water Polos, Hales' took the win scoring goal after goal. In the Swimming, Hales' boys gave their House a great start which the girls never looked like losing. It's noticeable that Hales' fielded full teams in every aquatic event and their ability to put students on the pitch (or the deep end in this case) means they're worthy leaders of the Band Trophy at this stage.

Cross Country

It was a warm, sunny day on the school field with each House set up and raring to go for this year's Cross Country event. All four Houses charged into action when the whistle sounded for the runners to go. All participants showed great determination and team spirit throughout the course, encouraging one another to try and beat the next person in front of them. From strong early leaders to runners digging deep for those valuable House points, every effort contributed to a brilliant display of perseverance and camaraderie. With enthusiastic support from staff and students and tightly contested races across all age groups, the event captured the very best of the House system at King Henry's, showing great enthusiasm and a shared pride in representing their House. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the members of each house who ran a good race. Results are as follows: 1st White's, 2nd Hales', 3rd Holland's, 4th Sherwyns's

Junior House Music

All houses delivered fantastic performances in the Junior house music competition, each showcasing their own strengths, creativity, and diverse talents—from vocals and strings to percussion, brass, and woodwind. Holland's took the win with an impressive 20-point lead with their incredible performances throughout each section. It was a brilliant event all around, with students clearly loving the chance to perform and celebrate together. A huge well done to everyone involved! Massive thanks to Mr. Ross for organising such a great event.

House Darts

House Darts delivered an unforgettable morning packed with personality, drama, and a touch of the unexpected. From the outset, the atmosphere was electric—spiced up with lively energy, flashes of King Julian-esque flair, and even the unique backdrop of a wedding celebration woven in to start the day. The sound of traditional Bhangra Dhol music pulsed through the venue, giving the whole event a vibrant, cultural edge that set it apart from your standard darts night.

On the oche, competition was fierce, though not without its surprises. Hales'', tipped by some to make a strong run, unfortunately didn't hit the mark and were knocked out in Round 1. Sherwyns's followed suit shortly after, exiting in the next round and leaving the field a gripping final between the newly married Beau and the formidable King Finn of White's. They both brought intensity and composure to the showdown, delivering a finale worthy of the occasion and keeping spectators on the edge of their seats until the very end. Above all, it was a fantastic assembly enjoyed by everyone in attendance—full of laughter, competition, and memorable moments. A significant thank you must go to Jack and the tech crew whose setup and production elevated the entire event. Without their efforts behind the scenes, House Darts simply wouldn't have been showcased in the incredible style that made the event so special.

We would also like to introduce our new Hales' Head of House Mr. Thompson who is excited to lead an energetic and eager team. We wish him all the best and look forward to the competition. Thank you so much to Mr. Phillips who stepped in at a dark moment for Hales'' and brought stability and empathy to their assemblies and events in the Spring Term. We know how much the House Captains, especially Sophie and Arniya, appreciated his support.

As of Easter the current standing are Hales' in the lead followed by White's, Sherwyns's, and Holland's. With Sports Day, Cricket, Rounders, House Points and Participation all still to come, the competition is still wide open.

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Nick's Name Lives On

Old Coventrian Nick Newbold, who died just over a year ago, at the age of only 62, now has a permanent memorial after Coventry Rugby Club renamed the Butts Park Arena the 'Nick Newbold Stadium' in recognition of his contribution as a much-loved former Director of the club.

The change of name applied officially from Saturday 21 March when a ceremony took place at the game against Doncaster Knights. Nick, who was educated at King Henry VIII School in the 1970s, was involved with the club for 17 years and also served as Chair of Trustees at Sky Blues in the Community, Coventry City FC's charitable arm. He was a member of the Acorns Coventry fundraising group in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice, as well as supporting other community sports teams, and a keen supporter. too, of Warwickshire County Cricket Club.

Coventry Chairman Jon Sharp, leftmost, addresses the crowd at the Butts on 21 March, accompanied by members of the Newbold family.

Club Chairman Jon Sharp said "I knew Nick – 'Nobby' – for well over 30 years, the last 16 or so being when he served on the board of this club so well. Fun, kind, caring, cheerful, mischievous, chaotic, dedicated, enthusiastic, brilliant! I am delighted for the club to honour him and his legacy in this way." whilst Nick's family and friends made a statement saying: "The Newbold family are incredibly proud to have Nick's name forever linked to the club and city he loved so much. We all miss him every day, but the stadium renaming ensures the 'Nick Newbold' legacy will live on, continuing to support the city he cared about so deeply, Brilliant!"

Coventry and Doncaster players and the match officials lead a minute's applause in Nick's memory

Marathon Ladder

There have been no new entries to the OC Marathon Ladder since it was last published in December. Let us know if you record a good time before the next newsletter is published.

Rank	Name	Time	Marathon	Year
1	B.B. Heatley	2.13.55	Windsor Chiswick	1964
2	K. Binks	2.27.44	Manchester	1973
3	D. Smith	2.28.50	London	1982
4	Roland Mailler	2.29.02	Boston	1998
5	S.N. Morris	2.29.12	New York	1981
6	J.G.Wheeler	2.32.30	Birmingham	1982
7	D.N. Glassborow	2.39.40	London	1981
8	M.L.Cole	2.43.39	Coventry	1981
9	Graham Wigley	2.43.56	London	1986
10	G.Herbert	2.44.28	London	1983
11	S. Horton	2.46.14	Birmingham	1983
12	E.W.Norrish	2.48.49	Nottingham	1981
13	Adam Huxford	2.52.48	Brighton	2025
14	V.Pauzers	2.53.41	New York	1981
15	H. Wade-Jones	2.55.49	London	2025
16	P.Haines	2.56.18	Barnsley	1981
17	Paul Gaskell	2.56.49	Dublin	2012
18	Paul Chapman	2.59.41	Houston	2020
19	Richard Charley	3.02.48	Shakespeare	2007
20	Kathryn Stuart	3.06.52	Loch Ness	2017
21	Richard Powell	3.07.24	London	2015
22	M.R.Shelton	3.07.54	Coventry	1982
23	Ian Hurry	3.09.23	Sheffield	1990
24	Malcom Saville	3.09.27	London	1994
25	Neville Chapman	3.09.28	Loch Ness	2014
26	Peter Mahiques	3.09.56	London	1994
27	Peter Jones	3.11.15	London	1983
28	D.R.Gadsby	3.13.28	Coventry	1982
29	Nigel Harrison	3.14.10	Coventry	1981
30	R.A. Bartlett	3.18.56	Coventry	1982
31	Adrian Smith	3.19.20	Mid Wales	1989
32	Paul Barnes	3.21.12	Manchester	2017
33	R.Brandon	3.23.00	New York	1981
34	Zoe Milton	3.23.27	Edinburgh	2015
35	A.R.Cowman	3.24.46	Coventry	1981
36	J.P. Griffiths	3.25.00	London	1983
37	Allan Bolton	3.25.24	Solihull	1982
38	Wilf Pattison	3.25.38	Coventry	1981
39	Richard Dyson	3.26.33	Coventry	1983
40	I.M.Thomas	3.27.18	Coventry	1982
41	R.G.Adams	3.28.37	Coventry	1982
42	Emma Garnett	3.29.19	London	2024
43	Harry Dunlop	3.29.21	Richmond	2024
44	Shamira Naidu-Young	3.34.59	Manchester	2024
45	Steve Randle	3.36.36	London	2019
46	L.Baldon	3.36.48	Coventry	1981
47	D. Blundell	3.42.03	Coventry	1982
48	R.W.Haw	3.42.20	Coventry	1982
49	A.J. Kockelbergh	3.43.28	Coventry	1982
50	A.R. Hall	3.45.07	Coventry	1982
51	M.C. Breakwell	3.46.22	London	1983
52	Richard Beamish	3.48.51	Birmingham	1982
53	N.J.Hobday	3.49.18	Coventry	1982
54	James Steatham	3.50.30	Shakespeare	2009
55	Will Spencer	3.50.42	London	2008
56	Scott Morton	3.51.37	London	2025
57	Daniel Hawcutt	3.52.32	New York	2008
58	M.Garside	3.52.36	Coventry	1982
59	Tim Hall	3.53.57	London	2005
60	David Bridges	3.56.53	Chester	2011
61	Louise Wooley	3.57.51	Brighton	2024
62	Victoria Chase	3.58.23	Manchester	2025
63	Russell Baum	3.59.36	Prague	2006
64	B.J.Bennet	3.59.50	Coventry	1981
65	K. Greenhall	4.04.00	Cardiff	1982
66	Jonathan Spurgeon	4.05.33	Barbados	2002
67	Emily LeCornu	4.10.00	Windermere	2010
68	P.R.Kennedy	4.10.51	Coventry	1982
69	Nicki Whetstone	4.11.28	London	2015
70	Anna Dunn	4.18.38	London	2025
71	Amy Charlotte	5.01.44	London	2025
72	Phil Errington	5.16.41	London	2025
73	Emily Krombas	5.30.00	London	2025
74	Sam Lazarus-Keene	5.34.02	Clifftop Challenge	2018
75	Sue Webb	6.09.14	London	2025

Updating Your Details on the Alumni Database

You can easily review and update your details at any time:

1. Visit https://khviii.alumni-online.com/Main
2. Select 'Personal info' from the drop-down Menu
3. Enter the email address through which you have received this newsletter as this is your registered email address on the database.
4. If you don't know your password or can't remember it, click 'Forgot your Password?', then enter your registered email address. Finally, click on 'Email password reset link'.

Boys' Sport Report – A Season of Progress, Depth and Success

It has been another outstanding period for boys' sport at King Henry VIII, with success across all year groups reflecting not only results, but the depth, commitment and culture that continues to underpin the programme. Across rugby, hockey, athletics and cricket, boys have consistently demonstrated resilience, ambition and a genuine pride in representing the school.

U12 Boys

The U12 cohort have set the tone brilliantly this year, laying strong foundations for future success.
In rugby, the A team lost just one game all season, including an excellent, hard-fought victory away at Bablake, showing composure and game awareness beyond their years. The B team have been equally impressive, securing 3 wins from 4 fixtures, demonstrating clear depth within the year group and a collective willingness to learn and improve.
Hockey has been another major highlight. The U12 A team were crowned County Plate Champions, including a standout 3–0 win against Princethorpe, combining strong defensive structure with clinical finishing. The B team also enjoyed a number of convincing victories, playing with energy, discipline and an increasing tactical understanding.
This is a year group that has not only achieved strong results, but has embraced training, fixtures and development with real enthusiasm.

U13 Boys – A Historic Year

This has been a truly special and defining year for the U13 boys.

The rugby programme has been exceptional, culminating in a fantastic Coventry Schools Cup victory – the first in 9 years. This achievement is a testament to the group's dedication, their consistency in training and, most importantly, their ability to perform under pressure in key moments. Alongside this historic success, the team also secured victory in the Coventry Schools Tournament, producing standout performances against strong opposition, including Bablake. Across the season, the squad has shown a blend of physicality, skill execution and tactical awareness that sets them apart.

In hockey, the A team produced an outstanding campaign, finishing 2nd in the county tournament, highlighted by an impressive 6–1 win against Wrekin. The B team have also played a crucial role in driving standards, recording strong wins and pushing the A team in training, which has been key to the overall success of the group.

This year group has demonstrated not just success, but genuine depth, competition for places and long-term potential—an exciting prospect for the future of boys' sport at the school.

U14 Boys

The U14 boys have enjoyed one of the most successful and well-rounded seasons across the school.

In hockey, the team were crowned County Champions, completed an unbeaten season, and progressed to the Midlands Tier 2 Finals without conceding a goal in open play—an exceptional defensive record that reflects organisation, discipline and collective accountability across the squad.
Rugby has also seen significant progress, with the group producing strong, physical performances and securing key wins against Leicester, KES Aston and Solihull. Their style of play has evolved into an exciting, high-tempo brand of rugby, combining forward dominance with attacking intent.

Adding to this success, the boys recently triumphed at the Sibford 7s tournament, winning the Plate competition with an emphatic 42–7 victory in the final against Rendcomb School—a brilliant way to round off a highly successful season and a reflection of their adaptability in the shorter format of the game.

U15 Boys

The U15 rugby team have been one of the standout attacking sides this season, consistently playing with ambition and confidence. Notable victories against Bablake (64–5), Leicester Grammar (50–36) and KES Birmingham (45–40) highlight their ability to play expansive, high-scoring rugby while maintaining intensity throughout matches.

Despite a narrow National Bowl defeat to Sibford, the group showed resilience and character, and their overall performances across the season have been outstanding. There is a strong sense that this group is building momentum as they transition into 7s and senior rugby.

In hockey, the squad have shown resilience and determination throughout a challenging season. Highlights include a dominant performance against Bablake and a well-earned draw against Loughborough Grammar, demonstrating their ability to compete with strong opposition and continue developing as a unit.

Senior Boys

At senior level, the hockey programme continues to thrive and set standards for the rest of the school. The team's progression to the Midlands Finals is a significant achievement, reflecting their resilience, composure and ability to compete against high-level opposition.

Victories over Princethorpe and Warwick, alongside strong performances against Bablake, showcased

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

the attacking quality and tactical maturity within the squad. The group has consistently demonstrated the ability to rise to big occasions and perform under pressure.

The contribution of the outgoing Year 13 students has been exceptional. Their leadership, commitment and enthusiasm have played a vital role in shaping the culture of the programme, and they leave behind a strong legacy for future cohorts to build upon.

Across all year groups, the consistent themes have been commitment, resilience, depth and a genuine love of sport. From historic cup wins and county titles to strong performances across multiple sports, boys' sport at King Henry VIII continues to grow from strength to strength.

The U13 Coventry Schools Cup victory stands as a defining moment this year—but just as important is the strength and depth across every age group, ensuring that this success is not a one-off, but part of a sustained and ambitious sporting future.

Girls' Sport – Commitment and Development

Attendance to training, especially netball, remains high as the girls continue to enjoy their sport. Successes this term have included, our 1st VII team winning a Bronze medal at the National U19 Vase Sisters N Sport Finals Day. A fantastic day out for the whole squad and fully deserving of the bronze medal after a steely 3rd / 4th play-off match. They also have their annual Showcase match v Bablake**.**

All girls have enjoyed competitive fixtures during our Games programme, with Saturday sport fixtures for those that commit to the after-school training. House netball for all of the age groups continues to be a strong feature of our calendar. Senior Girls Netball has grown, with 36 pupils having taken part in 1st - 4th teams this term.

Our 1st XI hockey girls played their inaugural 'Friday Night Lights' hockey fixture V Bablake - a feature that will now remain an annual event. They withstood lots of early Bablake pressure before conceding a goal in the first half. However, momentum shifted and the girls really showed grit and determination for a resilient second half - sadly not long enough to convert the pressure into an equaliser. A fantastic showcase event promoting girls sport, with lots of support on the sideline! With six Upper Sixth leavers this year, we thank them for their strong leadership and impact to girls' sport at Henry's.

A team to watch are our U13 VII netballers, with strong wins against Bablake, Nottingham High and Ratcliffe, they are a group of sports-mad, determined young ladies, many of whom playing club netball outside of school. They narrowly lost out on a Final 4 place in the Sisters N Sport competition, but have their sights set on this for next year.

Girls' Rugby is continuing in the Junior age groups. Highlights were the U14 team (a mix of Year 8s & Year 9s) who came second place at the U14 Sibford 7s. They train at lunchtimes on a Tuesday with Mr Jones & Miss Merricks, and there are some really keen players, a few of which play outside of school.

Many girls are also excelling in their sport outside of school. Arianna Virik is in contention for an U16 England golf team place; Ruby Cocksworth is part of the final selection for the u13 England Ice Hockey team, awaiting news; Megan Cullinane and Ezie Miller are playing Talent Academy hockey, Hannah Roche U13 County Hockey; Scarlett Callinan U13 Warwickshire County Netball; Elsie Ascroft is U13 Warwickshire County & U14 Loughborough Lightning pathway, and U15 Northants DPD. Many girls continue their sporting pursuits at clubs in the local area - a link that we are continuing to try and develop.

Help Needed by the OCA

Would you be willing to help with welcoming and/or refreshments at OCA events? Could you recommend a venue and co-host City Drinks? Manchester, London, Birmingham, New York, Hong Kong… or beyond?

Could you help us with posts and replies on Facebook and LinkedIn? If you are not local, but have ideas for events, would you be interested in joining us online at an OC Committee meeting?

Would you like support in helping set up a Class of Reunion for your year group?

Then get in touch: alumni@csfoundation.org.uk

Bowls

The Old Coventrians' annual bowls tournament will, as usual, take place in late August or early September.

The venue and exact date are yet to be confirmed.

If you fancy having a go at winning the Norman Teers trophy, named after a late, and legendary, Old Coventrian, and enjoying the post-tournament meal at a well-known Indian restaurant, please contact Peter Huxford by email at:

ocsports@csfoundation.org.uk

YOUR NEWSLETTER

The next issue of the OC Newsletter will be the Summer 2026 edition. This will be circulated some time before the end of the school term on Friday 3 July 2026.

Please ensure any items for inclusion are sent to us (email: **alumni@csfoundation.org.uk**) in good time and at the latest by Friday 12 June.

This edition of the OC Newsletter was put together by Keith Bushnell, Katie Chung and Catherine Kaye, with the help of other OCA committee members, and with digital assistance from Suzanne Jackson.

Seniors' Tea

The Old Coventrian Seniors' Afternoon Tea will take place on Monday 29 June, from 2.45pm - 4.45pm.

This is always one of the most enjoyable events of the year.

Anyone is eligible to attend who is from the Class of 1968 or earlier, i.e. who entered the senior school, aged 11, in or before September 1968 or is of the equivalent age if they did not join aged 11.

Email **alumni@csfoundation.org.uk** for more details.

Old Coventrians' Events 2026

More details on some of these events are shown elsewhere in this issue. Please check online for updates nearer the listed dates.

Diary Dates

Monday 29 June 2026, 11am
Old Coventrians v KHVIII School cricket match

Monday 29 June 2026, 2.45pm-4.45pm
Old Coventrian Seniors' Afternoon Tea

Saturday 12 *or* 19 September 2026
(exact date and tour times TBC)
Heritage Open Day OCA School Tours
Contact: alumni@csfoundation.org.uk

Saturday 14 November 2026, 6.30pm-10.30pm
103rd OCA Annual Dinner

Committee Meetings

Thursday 16 April 2026, 6pm-7pm
Jeff Vent Archive Room

AGM Thursday 12 June 2026, 6pm, followed by a Committee Meeting

Cricket

The Old Coventrians v. School cricket fixture has been arranged for Monday 29 June 2026, with an 11am start.

OCA Committee 2025-26

- Katie Chung (Chair, Class of 1988)
- Rob Phillips (Vice-Chair, Class of 1993)
- Keith Bushnell (Secretary, Class of 1972)
- Ian Cresswell (Treasurer, Class of 1973)
- Jan Butler (Retired staff)
- Peter Huxford (Retired staff)
- Peter Owen (Class of 1955)
- Stefan Halikowski Smith (Class of 1981)
- Jeremy Thomas (Retired staff)

Ex Officio Members:

- Rich Sewell - Head (OCA Honorary President)
- Catherine Kaye (Alumni Relations Officer)

Co-opted:

- Chris Spriggs (Retired staff)