



West House

INDEPENDENT PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR BOYS

WHOBAMAGAZINE

ANNUAL REVIEW

2025

WHOBA MAGAZINE

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Both this WHOBA magazine and the current school magazine
are available to download at www.westhouseprep.com



CALL TO ACTION: HELP US UPDATE OF OUR ARCHIVES

If you recognise anyone in these photos or can identify the year,
please get in touch at whoba@westhouseprep.com



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025

One of the highlights of the WHOBA year has become the summer luncheon, especially the music recital organised by Mr Lawrence which showcases the musical talent of current boys and recent leavers.

These recitals have entertained and amazed the returning old boys.

To celebrate the school excellence in the areas of music and drama, this year's magazine is focusing on WHOBA musicians and actors.

With the help of Tricia Moore we have pulled out of the archive a small sample of past pupils to illustrate the fine tradition of drama and music at West House.

This of course gave us the opportunity to reprint some archive pictures, and if you recognise yourself or friends and want to drop us a line we would love to hear your memories of school.

I'm delighted that various old boys have taken the time to drop us an email with memories of the school days. These are printed in the magazine, and if you would like to drop us an email with your memories and any photos, please email whoba@westhouseprep.com

This year also marks the retirement of Mark Denham after 37 years at West House.

I wish on behalf of the Old Boys to pass to Mark, our thanks for his time at the school. His enthusiasm and passion for sport and learning shaped the lives of hundreds of pupils. We all hope he enjoys his well deserved retirement with Vicki.

As ever the associations is grateful for the support of the Headmaster Mr Lyttle and everyone at the school that helps to make the Summer Luncheon and sports events so enjoyable.

Yours,

Jeremy Thornton
WHOBA Chairman



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Football

Sunday 22nd March 2026

Start 11am with access via Star Hill

AGM

Wednesday 22nd April 2026

7.30pm start

The AGM will be held at the school for those who wish to attend in person and on Zoom. Please email whoba@westhouseprep.com if you will be taking part in the meeting via Zoom. Zoom invites will be sent out on Tue 21st April. Those attending in person school access via the main entrance.

Annual Old Boys Luncheon & Open Day

Thursday 11th June 2026

11am – 2.30pm

Cricket

Sunday 5th July 2026

1pm start at Richmond Hill

This event is open to the year 6 summer leaver and of course all other WHOBA. Families welcome and tea available between innings.

Please email whoba@westhouseprep.com for more details

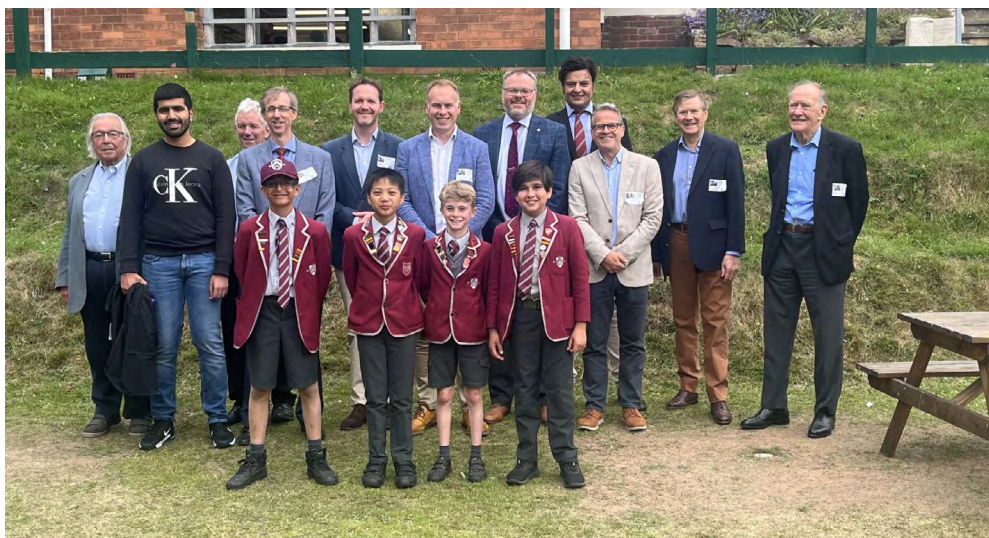
ROUND UP OF EVENTS

Summer luncheon

Sunshine, stories, and a spectacular school lunch – the annual West House Old Boys’ Summer Luncheon once again proved to be a much-loved highlight in the calendar.

This year’s event saw a fantastic turnout, with Old Boys spanning several generations returning to the school grounds to reconnect, reminisce, and see how West House continues to thrive. As ever, the afternoon began with a guided tour of the school, where guests were able to revisit familiar corridors and classrooms, and see the latest additions and improvements to the site. A visit to the old boarding house remains a firm favourite, with many pausing to share memories and stories from their time living under its roof.

The tour was followed by one of Sue’s legendary lunches – a magnificent spread that delighted all who attended. The dining hall buzzed with conversation and laughter as guests tucked into a selection of traditional favourites and seasonal treats, all prepared with Sue’s trademark flair and attention to detail.



Importantly, there is no cost to attend the luncheon – it’s our way of saying thank you and keeping the West House spirit alive. Each year, we’re thrilled to welcome back familiar faces and are always especially pleased to see “new Old Boys” joining us for the first time.

The afternoon concluded with a concert performed by current pupils – a tradition that continues to impress year after year. With a programme showcasing a wide range of musical talent, from classical solos to contemporary ensembles, the performance left a lasting impression and reminded everyone of the vibrant creativity that continues to flourish at West House.

We are always delighted to welcome our Old Boys back to school and thank everyone who attended for helping to make the day so special. We look forward to seeing even more of you next year!



Basketball

In December we held our annual West House Old Boys basketball match. With the weather holding up, we were able to play outside on the all-weather courts. Under the expert guidance of Mark Denham, the players were split into four teams, each captained by:

Blue – Gordon Gittins (2013)
 Green – James Horn (2017)
 Plain – Neil Sharma (1990)
 Red – Mansoor Bangash (1989)

With the help of Richard Smith (2004), a series of exciting matches unfolded, filled with slick passing, competitive spirit, and plenty of laughs.

The final showdown saw Green take on Blue for the title of Old Boys Champions – with Green securing an impressive 11-0 victory and remaining unbeaten throughout the day! Meanwhile, Red and Plain faced off in a friendly match that ended in a thrilling 8-8 draw.

The annual basketball event continues to be a highlight – full of enthusiasm, skill, and a few wild shots! A huge thank you to everyone who participated and made the morning such a success.

We can't wait for next year!

Football

This year's WHOBA match brought together a fantastic crowd, with 26 former players signing in. It was a brilliant spread of generations, from 2011 – 2024. All united by a love of the game.

The atmosphere was electric, and everyone enjoyed catching up both on and off the pitch. While the strikers may need a bit more practice on their finishing (we counted at least seven shots off the woodwork!), the goalkeepers put on a stellar performance and kept the score tight throughout.

The game itself was a nail-biter. With just moments to go, the bibs clinched the win with a dramatic last-minute goal, sealing the match 5-4.

Thanks to everyone who came along — it was a great day of football, fun, and reconnecting. We're already looking forward to the next one!





Mark Denham

HEAD OF PE AND GAMES 1988-2022, PE TEACHER 2023-2025

When I was asked to write a recollection of my time at West House School I was given the onerous task of trying to fit my 37 years into a brief 300 words - I will do my best!

I started at West House in the Summer term of 1988. My previous jobs had been in secondary schools so it was a huge change moving from teaching U16 and U18 teams to what was, in the early days, Years 4-8. The previous Head of P.E. had also previously taught in secondary schools and his advice was to treat the West House Year 8 pupils as if they were Year 11 - an early indication of the standards that could be achieved. This was good advice as the boys in those days were very mature for their age and very advanced.

West House was a completely different school in those early days when compared with today. The school had a number of weekly boarders with the lessons being taught until 5.15pm and sports clubs running every day until tea. Every day, boys also had games either early or late in the afternoon which was something they very much enjoyed. The extra games lessons reflected in the performances in matches and tournaments with the school rarely losing.

Every afternoon at late break Mrs Taylor, Head of Catering, would make sure hot crumpets were on a plate in the staffroom for staff to enjoy which the PE staff made the absolute most of and helped with the long afternoons and clubs!

The male members of staff then had to do a boarding duty one day a week until 9.30pm to help Mr and Mrs Duce. The boarders lived in Woodbourne upstairs in dormitories where Mr and Mrs Duce also lived. During the Summer Term, many more boys decided to become weekly boarders to provide them with an introduction to boarding life before many transferred to boarding schools across the Midlands and beyond. A privilege of boarding was the option to access the outdoor swimming pool supervised every night and to move from one end of the site to the other via Boarders' Pride. Swimming was very popular and the pool site was adjacent to the Centenary Building housing the library, art room and ICT suite.

When I started at West House, matches against Hallfield did not take place following a legendary disagreement between parents on the sideline some years before. However, we



were travelling all over the Midlands to play matches as far away as Leicester and Shrewsbury. I knew Gary Cook, an ex-England international athlete, who had also just started at Hallfield as Head of P.E. and we first reignited the sporting competition with basketball fixtures. These were a success and the parents remained calm so we built up a very good relationship with Hallfield playing many more sports over the years. Dave Tobin took over as Head of P.E. at Hallfield and we also became very good friends and created a very pleasing environment within which to play inter school matches.

The basketball matches were played towards the end of the school day at Under 11 and Under 13 level with both Year groups playing at the same venue. Dave and I would often

have a debrief on the way home in the pub to talk about the fixture with a meal and a pint! The rivalry between the schools was always intense but good-hearted.

We decided to do more evening fixtures with Hallfield including table tennis in Big School and badminton in the sports hall, now known as Duce Hall. Snooker and bar football also featured in the games room which used to be situated on the top floor of Woodbourne. Neither Dave nor I thought anything of regularly staying until 7.00pm.

In the early days, we used to play hockey fixtures and I was extremely grateful to Mr Sharma who was the Midland U21 coach and came in to help on Friday afternoons.

When I arrived at West House, the outdoor pool was used in the Summer Term with all boys swimming on most days. The Summer Term also saw the Inter-House Swimming Gala take place on a Saturday morning with parents attending and was followed by Speech Day in the Duce Hall and the Summer Ball in a marquee sited on the Headmaster's Lawn. This was always a hectic busy fun day.

To begin with, I wasn't sure about working with a much younger age group than I was used to. In secondary school, the Year 7 children seemed very young. I thought I would probably not stay for very long and make a return to my previous age group. However, I did not realise just how much West House takes you over as you become part of a very important family who all look after each other and I can honestly say that as the months and years passed, I enjoyed every day! I learnt to adapt and worked particularly well with the Year 8 teams who had fixtures throughout the week and tournaments becoming a feature of Saturdays and Sundays.

The first football tournament we entered was at Ellesmere College, which became something of a Sunday tradition in subsequent years. We were particularly strong that year and played very well, reaching the final against The Ryleys School from Liverpool. Nicky Plotnek, our captain, scored twice but both were disallowed on technicalities on the line. However, Russel Benson scored from an indirect free kick having been taught to aim to deflect the ball off the keeper



which he did; again, unfortunately, the referee, apparently not knowing the rule, did not give the goal. We eventually lost 1-0 with all the other PE Teachers watching said we were very unlucky. The day remains in my mind for all the wrong reasons.

Nicky was an exceptional player. In Year 4, he played up front for the U13 team, scoring goals against Hallfield. He went off to be signed by West Bromwich Albion and he was first of many exceptional sportsmen at the school during my time.



There are many other highlights across the years and far too many to recount here.

Henry Arnold's year group were very good at athletics, winning the Blue Coat event and the Midland Championships at Bromsgrove where the results were truly exceptional with West House boys finishing first in the 100M, 200M (Tobi Oreje), 400M, 800M (Henry Arnold), 1500M (Liam O'Brien) and the relay. We qualified for the National Finals on a Sunday during late July at the Alexander Stadium. Tobi Oreje was first in the finals at 100M and joint first in the 200M final. Both Liam and Henry made the finals in 800M and 1500M.

When it came to cricket, one of the finest traditions of the school was to present a brand-new bat to any pupil who scored 100 runs which, in the days before limited over contests at prep school level was possible.

Three boys achieved this: Ranjan Chopra v Eversfield, Haris Ismail who was 98 not out (close enough!) v Warwick who represented Warwickshire U11 Team a year early and Oliver Lawrence – yes, that Oliver Lawrence! Early in my time, four boys were selected for Warwickshire in a very successful School team: Robin French, Charles Webb, Richard Maguire and Adrian Brindley. Neil Maguire was U9 cricket captain and would set his own field for hardball cricket with Brearley like precision. He played for Warwickshire in the U11 team a year early and took 9 wickets in an innings for West House against Warwick School.

In football we had a very strong era with Malvind Benning, Luke Nettleford and Sukhvir Lyall all signing up for professional football clubs. They represented the school in midfield and only lost one game in 4 years. Sadly, this was against Hallfield in their last match ever, away 1-2; Sukhvir, I remember, had broken his wrist only the week before. They won many tournaments and cups including a prestigious one hosted by Aston Villa. They were also known as 'The Dream Team'! Malvind went on to play football professionally for Walsall, Port Vale, Mansfield and is now at Shrewsbury Town. We were privileged when he returned to West House a couple of years ago as Guest of Honour at Speech Day.

Oliver Lawrence's exceptional sporting ability was evident from a very early age. He played for the U11 team when he was in Year 4 and helped the team to win the Ellesmere College Tournament and received Player of the Tournament from all the PE teachers there. He represented Warwickshire at cricket and was on Aston Villa's books making his way into their academy. However, it was rugby in which he truly shone, even from the earliest age and the rest, as they say, is history.

The same year group was very talented in the swimming pool, winning the regional rounds and representing the West Midlands in the National Swimming Finals in Sheffield. The team of George Davies, Mark Laing, James Cuthbert and Oliver Lawrence qualified for the main final and were 2nd in the National Final. After West House, George went on to represent Great Britain in water polo.

More recently, I went to see four ex-pupils play at Twickenham for King Edward's School in the National U18 Rugby final. Daniel Bassett, Kai Mewer, Rory Moffitt and Charlie Hollingworth all acquitted themselves with aplomb.

During the last four years at West House, I have been very fortunate to work with yet more very talented year groups. Kyle Ismail was one of a number of boys in a very strong year group having four county cricket players at their disposal. They won the Winterfold tournament, the Aston Villa tournament and were undefeated in football, rugby, basketball and cricket. I was immensely proud that Rishi Sinha and Lawrence Sandher were selected for the district and then Birmingham County football teams.

Roman Dhanda, Eisa Iqbal, Uzair Gilani and Ali-Aoun Daneshyar are all names that will live long in the memory with success last year in the Ellesmere College tournament under the leadership of Thomas Woodward, being my final highlight.

I have always enjoyed every day coming into school and teaching at West House. The school is like a family with very keen and enthusiastic pupils and supportive parents. I will always cherish my fond memories and the many happy times.

Tributes to the Retiring Mark Denham

Alistair M J Lyttle – Headmaster (2004 -)

I first met Mark Denham when I appeared at West House to coach cricket in the summer of 1993 before taking up my first teaching post at Devonport High School for boys. My first impression was that he must have joined teaching from the military. His well-rehearsed phrases, delivered with an entirely straight face were unique; "If you want to be a clown, join a circus!" Often, in those early days, I had to turn away from the boys to disguise my smile as the line was delivered.

When I returned to the staff on a full-time basis in 1996, Mark already held legendary status. His direct manner, exceptionally high standards, enthusiasm and ability to add ten minutes of stoppage time to a football match if West House needed an equalizer, set him aside from all other teachers of PE I have encountered either before or since.

Mark was, and is, also great company. My first night out with him was to celebrate his 40th birthday along with Vicki Cave (later to become Mrs Denham), Susannah Palmer and Kim Duce. It was then that I discovered that Mr Denham also had incredible stamina and seemed to get very thirsty.

Mark has been part of the fixtures and fittings at West House for over 35 years and the likes of him will not be seen again. It was an absolute privilege to work alongside him for such a large part of my career. While the school proudly boasts of having had only five Headmasters in 130 years, it is also noteworthy that it has had only three Heads of PE between 1956 and 2023. There must be something about the place.

Well done, Mark, and thank you.



Kim Duce – Headmaster (1975 - 2004)

Some very happy memories.

Mark joined the West House Staff in 1988. As I said in my Headmaster's Speech at Swimming Sports:

"Our new Head of P.E. Is Mr. Mark Denham. To take over P.E. at West House in the Summer Term is really to be thrown in at the deep end! This is always the busiest term, especially on the sporting side. Mark Denham has already proved himself very hard-working, adaptable, understanding and enthusiastic. It is very much to his credit that today has been so enjoyable and successful."

And so it continued until his well-earned retirement last summer.

Mark played a full part in the West House team; he readily volunteered for many extra mural activities such as the annual French trips.

He also had a keen sense of fair play and was a scrupulously fair and impartial referee and umpire. Indeed, sometimes West House boys thought him too fair!

He was always very approachable and gave up his time to encourage and coach young and burgeoning talent. He also very much stood up for his department and ensured games and sports were well represented in the timetable.

Mark too was good company socially. I wish him a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

WEST HOUSE AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

MUSICIANS

Andrew Golder ARCM (1965)

Andrew was the eldest of three brothers at West House and went onto KE Five Ways and then the Royal College of Music and then to the RCM Opera School/ Drama Department.

A successful career as a baritone followed and for a number of years he appeared in various London shows including *My Fair Lady*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Street Scene*, *Aspects of Love*, *Miss Saigon* as well as tours in the UK.

Andrew then moved Europe where he was much in demand for concerts, oratorios and operas singing in France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Like many eminent professional musicians he also taught, clearly in his case use of the voice and had a studio in Vienna.



Christopher Churcher (2015)

"My name is Christopher and I left West House in 2015. After that I went to King Edward's School and then went on to study Music at the University of Oxford. I am now in the early stages of a career as a composer and baritone. This past summer I recorded my first full length professional album with Somerville College Choir. My music has been performed internationally,, including across Europe and America, and I have received commissions from ensembles such as the Southbank Sinfonia, VOCES8 and Ex Cathedra. My pieces have been performed by musicians including Anna Lapwood and have been recorded and broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Alongside composing, I sing as a Scholar with the Oxford Bach Soloists and with the Somerville College Choir, I sing regularly with Ex Cathedra, and I give solo recitals.

When I look back at myself as a West House pupil, I remember being quite an introverted day-dreamer, usually caught up in my own thoughts. I didn't really 'fit in' and was content keeping to the edges of things.

It took a while to grow into myself. I remember a real shift began when Ms Green arrived to teach Drama in, if I recall correctly, Year 4 or 5. She created an atmosphere in Drama that made it feel natural to try things out, and taking part in school productions helped me step out of myself so much. I did not think of it in grand terms at the time, but something definitely changed in me then. Performing in front of audiences offered me an outlet to find meaning and a sense of self.

Music was also definitely a part of my life at West House, though I would not have described it as a defining passion back then. I had singing lessons and piano lessons and played in various school ensembles, all of which planted little seeds which have helped me get to where I am today. One moment I remember vividly is when we performed a set of songs from *The Jungle Book* that had been arranged using notation software called Sibelius. It fascinated me that someone could put a piece of music together like that, and it was the first time I realised that arranging and composing were real, tangible things that people actually did. Later, when I first tried writing my own music, I thought back to that moment, Sibelius was the software I opened, and it is the one I still use today.

What I appreciate most in hindsight is that West House never tried to mould me into anything in particular. It was a place that was quite content to allow me to develop at my own pace and follow whatever held my interest. I left without a clear plan, or set road ahead of me, but with a genuine curiosity about the world, and that turned out to be more valuable than I could have understood at the time."



David John Munrow (1954)

David was born in Birmingham in 1942 and after West House went onto King Edwards School, and then Pembroke College, Cambridge with a post graduate studies at Birmingham University.

As a leading exponent of a whole range of early wind instruments he created new standards for the playing and appreciation of what was back then known as “early music”.

Founder and Director of the Early Music Consort of London with a harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood, his music scholarship helped unearth lost works and re-energise forgotten pieces.

He was also a great educator with zeal for communicating facts and explaining musical subjects, and held various teaching posts including at the Royal Academy of Music.

David was also known for collecting early woodwind instruments of every size and description and the skill to play them, and he held hundreds of lecture-recitals all over the country and abroad entertaining with his music skills and wit.

His enthusiasm for his music was most clearly apparent in his amiable presentation of Radio 3’s popular Pied Piper series which ran from 1971 to 1976 and he played on numerous radio, TV and film productions including BBC radio series The Hobbit”, TV Elizabeth R and many others.

Fraser Goulding (1961)

Fraser was born in Worcestershire in 1947 and after West House he went to KES before read music at Bristol University. He had during his time in Birmingham studied the piano with Sidonie Wasserman and the organ with Thomas Tunnard at Birmingham Cathedral.

After training as a repetiteur and conductor with James Robertson at the London Opera House, he was for six years assistant to Vilem Tausky on the opera course at Guildall School of Music and Drama.

In 1979 Fraser was appointed Musical Director of the D’Oyly Carte Opera from 1979 until the closure of the original company in 1982 he gained invaluable experience and continued to be in great demand for conducting Gilbert & Sullivan.

David conducted leading orchestra across the country including the London Concert Orchestra, The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manchester Concert Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Concert Orchestra, guest conductor at the Chamber Orchestra of Wales, the BBC Concert Orchestra, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with which he has performed Handel’s Messiah at the Royal Albert Hall.

Frazer was known for wide operatic repertoire encompassing works by Mozart, Bizet, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Britten and other, and in 1999 he conducted the world premiere of Alun Hoddinott’s three act opera Tower.



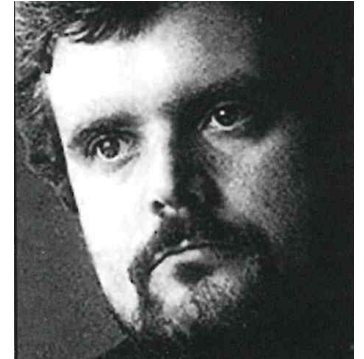
Lawrence (Lol) Mason (1963)

Lawrence began performing music in the late 1960s and with his friends Steve Broughton and Max and Chris Dunn played acoustic music across Birmingham. Their group was Back in the Band and in 1975 got a contract with Phonogram’s Vertigo label, but later changed their name to City Boy and added keyboards and became a six piece band. Under producer Robert Lange they released two albums in 1976 City Boy and Dinner at the Ritz. It was from their fourth album Book Early that their single 5.7.0.5 climbed to No8 in the charts. The release of the LP “It’s Personal” followed but the band broke up acrimoniously.

Lol moved onto form The Maisonettes with Mark Tibenham and Nick Parry playing a more commercial style of the 1980s and another top ten hit with a single called Heartache Avenue that was a global hit in 1983. As a song it has endured the test of time was used as the soundtrack for a 1996 Ford car commercial and then in 2005 hip-hop group Roll Deep sampled the track for their hit The Avenue.

Another hit followed Where I Stand but The Maisonettes broke up after their 1984 album Maisonettes for Sale. While in the band Lol was known as The Headmaster as he was a total professional and he treated the role of a musician as a serious job. The Maisonettes were given the Freedom of the City of Birmingham.

Clearly a very talented and versatile artist after the band’s break up he concentrated on scriptwriting and gained accolades for his work including the 1991 Radio Times Comedy Award for Total Accident. His six part Radio 4 series Richard Barton, General Practitioner proved a highly success and had a second run, and Lol also contributed to Radio 4’s weekending and a the spoof documentary The Spoken Page.





Neil Black (1945)

A talented musician from an early age Neil kindly wrote to the school back in 1989 to say that he recalled “creep down to Wellington Road about 5pm in the evenings for oboe lessons, and have thus played it for 4/5th of my life. I’ve been at it professionally since I came down from Oxford in 1956”



Neil was at West House from 1940 to 1945 before following his two brothers to Rugby. He then went on to Exeter College Oxford where he wrote to say he had his first (and only) short lived brush with the law before abandoning it to study history. Music had always been his real love and from 1948 and through the early 1950s he was playing with the National Youth Orchestra, after which he became well known as a soloist and chamber music player. He played for many ensembles including the Academy of St Martin’s in

the Fields, London Mozart Players, and made regular concert appearances at home and abroad.

In 1960 he was appointed Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music.

He was principal oboe player with the much-recorded English Chamber Orchestra and made many well-known recordings oboe concertos of Mozart, Bach, Vaughan Williams and Vivaldi.

Neil was appointed OBE in the 1989 New Year Honours.

Soweto Kinch (1991)

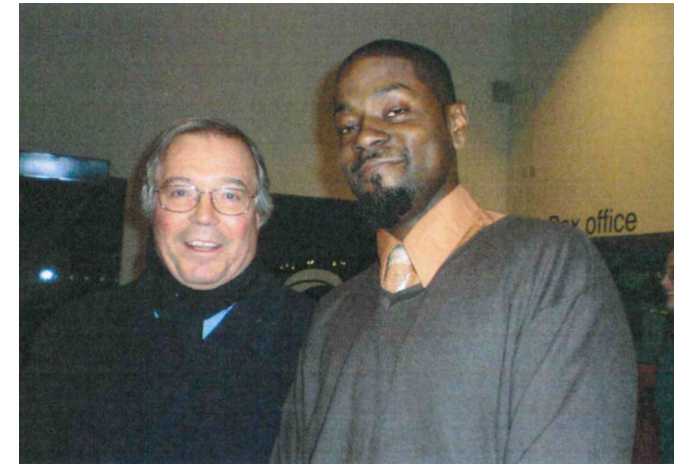
Born in 1978 in London, Soweto began playing the saxophone at the age of nine, after learning the clarinet at Allfathing Primary School in Wandsworth. His long association with Birmingham started when he joined West House.

After meeting Wynton Marsalis four years later, he discovered and became passionate about jazz, first concentrating on piano and later in his teens switching to alto saxophone as his main instrument. After West House, Soweto went to Bromsgrove School and then onto Hertford College, Oxford to study Modern History. Early musical influences include the vocalist and percussionist Frank Holder.

He also benefited from participation in the programmes of Tomorrow’s Warriors, the music education and artist development organisation cofounded in 1991 by Janine Irons and Gary Crosby, and played with Crosby’s Jazz Jamaica All Stars collective.

WHOBAs first commented on his success when he achieved the top honours at Montreaux, since when

he has gone from strength to strength both home and abroad - but never forgetting his allegiance to Birmingham. Soweto has won a string of prestigious awards, including a Mercury Music Prize for an album of the year, MOBO, Urban Music and several BBC Jazz Awards. His debut album ‘Conversations with the Unseen’ brought critical acclaim for the way it blended his own brand of jazz, hip and rap.



WEST HOUSE AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

ACTORS

Alastair Natkiel (1992)



Alastair's interest in theatre and acting started with parts in school productions and local shows. Both his parents were connected to the industry with his father being a director and his mother training as an actress, so theatre and TV were in his blood. After a family trip to London to see *Les Misérables* he thought this is what I want to do.

He trained at the Manchester School of Theatre.

Alastair works in both theatre and TV, with varied roles including playing Lee Banks in the incredible BBC drama 'Line of Duty' which was he said an amazing show to be involved with, especially as it felt like the whole country was talking about it.

Alastair runs his own company The Actor's Coach that holds weekly screen acting class over the web for other in or trying to get into the industry

He taught for years, so when Covid lockdown hit, Alastair wanted to provide a service for actors to keep working on their skills and stay sharp in the absence of group classes, and Alastair's company The Actor's Coach was founded.

A career highlight he says to date was doing the *Shrek the Musical* in the West End and being able to look

out and see my family and friends who were watching jump to their feet and go mad in applause. Alastair said it had taken 7 years of auditioning to make it on to a West End stage and it felt like a huge amount of hard work and heartache had paid off.

Alastair has numerous theatre and TV roles to his name including in

In London's West End: *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Shrek the Musical* and *The Go-Between*.

Other productions include: *Rock/Paper/Scissors* and *Standing at the Sky's Edge* at Sheffield Theatres and National Theatre; *The Merchant of Venice* at Stafford Shakespeare Festival; *Closer Than Ever*, *Early Birds* and *Our Boys* at Edinburgh Festival Fringe;

Laughter in the Rain – The Neil Sedaka Story on UK tour; *What Every Woman Knows* at the Royal Exchange, Manchester, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Barons Court and others.

TV credits: *Line of Duty*, *Silent Witness*, *Casualty*, *Coronation Street*, *The Marchioness Disaster*, *Hollyoaks*, *The Machines that Built the World* and the animated series *MINT*.

Film credits: *The Testing Point*, *Run*, *Mad to Be Normal*, *The Innocent*, *Make Aliens Dance* and *Two Sides*.



Robin French (1990)

Robin is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter. His first play, *Bear Hug*, won the Royal Court Young Writers Festival, where it earned an extended run. He has written extensively for the theatre, from *Musical Differences* as part of the National Theatre's connections programme, to *Crooked Dances* at the RSC, and *Rebel Music* at his hometown theatre, the Birmingham Rep.

Robin's short film *Crocodile* won awards at Cannes, Encounters, and Guanajuato festival in Mexico, and was BIFA-nominated for Best British short. Alongside his friend Kieron Quirke, Robin also co-created and wrote five series of the hit BBC sitcom *Cuckoo*, starring Greg Davies, Andy Samberg, Taylor Lautner and Andi MacDowell. *Cuckoo* was BBC3's biggest rating comedy launch and garnered nominations both at BAFTA and the British Comedy Awards.

Robin is currently developing new drama projects for television and film. He's written episodes of Sanditon (ITV), and been in the writers room on The Great (Hulu). When not writing, he enjoys working on his indie/samba band Sugarcane.

Looking back, Robin is amazed how when his long-term writing partner Kieron Quirke, wrote a script that it would lead to 'Cuckoo@ which ran for five series on TV, and it was surreal that Andie McDowell agreed to take part.

Robin a multi-talented individual loves writing songs and singing with his band, Sugarcane which he says is a mash up Samba, calypso and indie.

He was in a school band with his friend, Ben Hudson and later a bassist in Ben's band, they supported Amy Winehouse, played Jools Holland and opened the other stage at Glastonbury.



Neal Foster (1979)

Readers will recall past articles covering the many successes of Neal since he left West House and went to Clifton College and Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Neal's determination and character have been shown many times over the years, but was clearly illustrated when after a term at Warwick University studying drama Neal decided he should be performing the plays not just reading them.

Such confidence clearly marked Neal out as someone destined to shape events.

His resourcefulness and persistence confidence allowed Neal to talk Richard Dreyfus to fly in from New York to direct Hamlet for Neal's Birmingham Stage Company at The Old Rep.

The massive press interest helped to offset some of the budget implications that Neal at the time told WHOBA – the budget twice that of any previous production meant resources were stretched to the absolute limit. "The bottom line" Neal reported "is that it was a minor miracle – but we pulled it off."

Neal's theatre company's success for many years was based on a series of popular Christmas shows, many of them based Roald Dahl's classic children's books with highly successful national tours.

Many other productions were staged by Neal's company including Chekhov's The Seagull, Romeo and Juliet.

Neal Foster's career as an actor and manager has been marked by significant achievements and contributions



to the theatre industry. Here are some of his notable highlights...

Birmingham Stage Company: Foster founded and managed the Birmingham Stage Company, which has become one of the UK's leading producers of theatre for children and their families. The company has staged over 100 productions and has toured internationally, including the Sydney Opera House, Delhi and Dubai.

TV credits: Neal appearing in television series such as "Freak of Nature" 2015, "Line of Duty" 2012, and "Hustle" 2004.

Neal is also well known for his work with the Horrible Histories series, where he has directed and adapted several productions including the world premiere of "Collision" and the British premiere of "Beau Jest".

Olivier Awards: Foster has been recognized with Olivier Awards for his contributions to theatre.

Neal Foster's dedication to theatre and his ability to create engaging and entertaining performances have made him and The Birmingham Stage Company one of the world's leading producers of theatre for children and their families.





Chaniel Kular (2010)

Mr Lyttle remembers Chaneil as very well behaved. He was always smiling and really enthusiastic. He was small in stature but mighty in terms of personality and always entertaining. His peers and the staff all thought really highly of him.

After making his debut as Tariq Amiri on the BBC soap opera Doctors in 2018, he began portraying the role of Anwar Bakshi in the Netflix comedy-drama series Sex Education with Gillian Anderson in 2019 to 2021.

He also starred in Informer in 2018 and the BBC's Black Narcissus in 2020 (image above). Kular then starred as Harri Bhavshar in the thriller film Accused, directed by filmmaker Philip Barantini in 2023, and 2024 in the ITV series Protection.

Can you walk us through your career journey, from when you began acting to landing your first role?

I'm very blessed that it all happened quite fast for me. I remember when I first went about finding out how the acting industry works, I realised the importance of having an agent – particularly for tv and film. After a handful of tries and meetings when I was younger, different obstacles were in the way of me securing one (distance, school etc). So, I decided when I was 18 to give it a shot myself. I hired some film equipment from my

university department, filmed two monologues as well as attaching a cover letter and some headshots in an email and sent them off. I managed to secure representation from one and from there I got auditions for professional tv and film work. It was about four months into acting that I managed to get the role.

What inspired you to take up acting?

I don't think there was necessarily a specific moment or event that triggered it, but rather a general love of performing and things overtime (school plays, for instance) and building confidence in my ability to try and pursue it as a career. I always remember growing up that I couldn't ever see myself doing anything else, so that added fuel to my fire too.

What advice would you give to an aspiring actor/actress?

I'd say try and maintain a strong sense of self-belief despite any negativity. This industry can be very tough and you'll probably find that most of the time you will be hit with rejection or you won't hear back at all – so it's important to have thick skin and keep pushing forward despite what can be exhausting at times. I think in a world where we have so many tools at hand, if sometimes you feel as though the right role isn't out there for you at the time, maybe go about trying to create it – although, granted, this is a lot easier said than done. It's also an industry where talent isn't the be all and end all – there's a deal of luck involved too. So just be sure going in that it's something you really want to do.

The WHOBA RECITAL - MUSIC for OLD BOYS of WEST HOUSE SCHOOL

Mr Mark Lawrence writes – It has been a pleasure to put on a short concert for visiting WHOBA members over the past few years. Unlike the other concerts that we hold during the year, this has a particular sense of occasion and focus. The performers know that the group of adults in the audience have come specially to relive a little of their much younger selves. The standard of playing and preparation must be as good as possible. It is unusual in that the concert is during lunchtime, when most boys are outside enjoying (we hope) the June weather. Big School is tidied up, the piano wheeled out into the middle and given a bit of a polish...

Each year, the musical programme is different and dictated by the performers, their instruments, progress and level and their choice of instruments.

In 2025, all the players were current pupils of WHS, ranging from age 7 to 11.



WHOBA Music Recital - Thu 12th June 2025 in Big School

Rui Y	Y6	cello	Russian wedding	<i>Kathy & David Blackwell</i>
Ethan T	Y5	violin	The legend of Ashitaka	<i>Joe Hisaishi</i>
Kai J	Y2	piano	Sonatina in C	<i>Muzio Clementi</i>
Robert N	Y5	cello	Minuet	<i>William Boyce</i>
Yixun C	Y3	guitar	Vuelvo al sur	<i>Astor Piazzolla</i>
Saiyan E	Y5	flute	Vivace	<i>George Frideric Handel</i>
Tristan F	Y6	cello	Scherzo	<i>Carl Webster</i>
Yifan C	Y5	piano	Lowside blues	<i>Joanna MacGregor</i>
WHS Brass Band			Chitty, chitty, bang, bang	<i>Robert & Richard Sherman</i>



The Power of Performance: *Celebrating the Success of Drama at West House School*

Over the past several years, Drama has continued to flourish at West House School, becoming one of the many vibrant and meaningful areas of school life. Our Year 6 productions, in particular, have established themselves as true highlights of the academic calendar—moments where creativity, confidence, and community come together in exceptional ways.

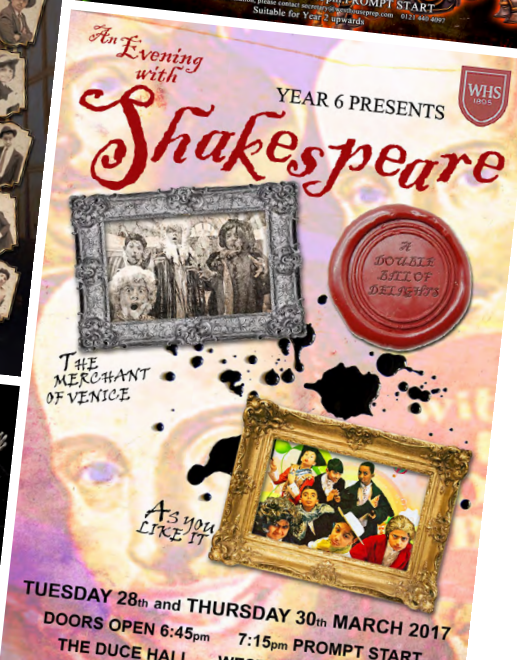
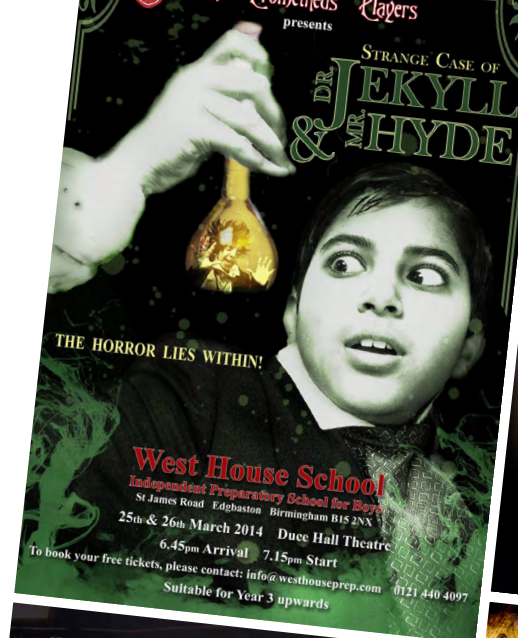
Since 2013, the Performing Arts Department has brought an extraordinary range of stories to life on stage. Pupils have had the opportunity to work within a rich variety of genres, from gothic classics and Shakespearean masterpieces to slapstick comedy and lively musicals. Our bespoke, carefully adapted productions have included Frankenstein, Jekyll and Hyde, Robin Hood, Dracula, Treasure Island, As You Like It, Buggy Malone, The Merchant of Venice, The Enchanted Bookstore, The Curious Case of the Royal Ring, Dr Experimentor and The League of Evil, and Young Sherlock.

Each performance has offered pupils far more than a chance to shine under the lights. Drama at West House nurtures essential life skills: teamwork, resilience, leadership, concentration, and the confidence to express ideas with clarity and imagination. Whether perfecting lines, supporting peers backstage, or stepping bravely into a new role, every child experiences growth that extends well beyond the stage.

For families, these productions have become treasured annual events. Parents frequently share their pride and delight in seeing the development, maturity, and joy radiating from pupils during each performance. These moments strengthen the bond between school and home, reminding us of the collective power of the arts to unite a community.

The continued success of the Performing Arts at West House School reflects our deep belief in the importance of creative expression within education. Drama empowers pupils to find their voice, embrace challenge, and discover new aspects of themselves—all while contributing to unforgettable experiences that enrich the whole school.

Rachel Green, Head of Drama & Performing Arts



The Class of 1952

STEPHEN JAMES LINE

Stephen kindly sent in some great memories of his time at West House from 1946 to 1952. Stephen writes:

Many Happy memories of classes and the teachers initially at the Junior School with Mr Aubrey, Mrs Guinness, and English with Miss Cotterell.

Daily prayers and role call in Big School with classes also on Saturday morning till 12.30.

Maths with DTC Field, History with 'Bogie' Nicholls, Latin with Mr Tidd-Pratt, Gym/PT with Mr Lansdown, geography with Major Sparrow, Maths with Mr Alan Pratt, and Stephen recall another teacher Mr Rogers. Carpentry was with Mr Trotman and I uses the basic skill's he leant quite often.

Learning to swim in the indoor pool (naked) with Miss ? Ed – any help with name please – with swimming racing and diving events in the outdoor pool at the Annual Sports. I broke the Plunge record in 1952 Sports.

Learning football, hockey and rugby with Big Gleniffer as coach and took us to play at Richmond Hill. I was Captain of U11 Cricket 1952. Warwickshire cricket Pros from Edgbaston taught us to play better cricket in the school nets. Travelling fully changed in sports gear, in black taxis to play matches at Hall Field Prep and to Arden House.

I was a weekly boarder for last year in Long Dorm, Woodbourne, and we were allowed one bath a week! Evenings with DTCF playing cards in his lounge. The boarders also learnt archery on top field. DTCF's Secretary was Miss Spinks.

There was punishment by Senior Boys that was "facing the clock".

School food was good with amazing breakfasts and lunches ...and suppers too.

Editor – Stephen kindly sent to the school archive a large file of his school and sports team photos and many other WHS documents. We are extremely grateful for his kind donation.

Stephen Line also had an elder brother Richard at the school from 1942 -1947 and his twin brother, Adrian who left in 1949 to go to Abbotsholme School.

HUGH ROBERT BOLTON

Hugh has also shared some memories and wrote:

After leaving WHS I went George Dixon's Grammar School taking O and A levels and then went to University of Nottingham 1960 to 1963 studying B.Sc(Eng) in Electrical Engineering. Then a Ph.D (University of London/Imperial College) 1971 in Electrical machines. DIC, M.I.E.E.

I recall being taught good punctuation and grammar by Miss/Mrs Cottrell, and being told by Mr Tidd-Pratt to desist from using a biro in Latin classes. Speeding up my mental arithmetic in Mr Long's maths classes with the help of the speed tests (originally introduced I think by the Head - Mr Field), complete with strips of paper for the answers.

Appreciating high-order woodworking skills as evidenced by the woodwork teacher - Mr Trotman and his amazing model ships and wooden dogs.

Enjoying group singing of traditional songs in Mr Bennett's music classes, though sometimes being put off by the next boy who seemed at that stage to be able only to croak, not sing (it was David Munrow, later to join the B'ham cathedral choir and later still to become internationally famous as a leading Early Music pioneer!!).

Another story from Mr Bennet class singing was following a minor disturbance in the ranks Mr Bennet asked Guy Houghton "Did you push that boy?" which got the quick response from Guy (later an eminent medic - see obit in 2016 W.H. Magazine): 'No sir- I pulled him !'

In the Summer term, Mr Bennett often appeared in cricketing whites.

I recall being amused by Mr Landsdown's (PE teacher) appearance as an elderly gentleman in three piece suite, gold watch-chain etc who referred to his mode of transport (bicycle) as his horse and who took us through what I guess were army type physical routines - arms stretch, knees bend etc



Tricia Moore in School and Old Boys Archive

Other Memories of West House

MICHAEL HARDINGHAM (1953)

My brother and I covered 14 years at WHS from 1946 to 1960.

I recall my first year at Wheeley's Road under the care of the kindly Aubreys and being very sad that they were retiring at the end of 1947. I recall Mrs Hooper Phillips arriving and serving out the tapioca at lunchtime and the junior school staff, Mrs Murphy who was married during our year in J3, Miss Good and Miss Reynolds in J2 and Mrs Guinness in J1. Mr Hooper Phillips sorting out disputes at playtime. Also watching out for frogs and newts in the garden pond and playing tig around the perimeter path. Friends at that time Shapiro, whom I will be seeing at Glyndebourne next week, Reeves, Cannon and a host of others.

Walking in line to see the King, Queen and princesses in an open saloon at Five Ways. Climbing over a crashed aircraft from the war opposite the senior school.

Senior school was not too frightening. Kindly Mr Waterfall reading spooky stories, Major Sparrow relating his experiences in the far East and showing us films. Miss Cotterill introducing us to Kipling and serial readings from Enid Blyton last thing on Saturday mornings.

Mr Mc Namara introducing us to Latin from which grammar made sense to me for the first time.

Kindly Mr Pratt and Ballard book two before the exciting start on Individual work.

Mr Field's overall teaching ability was remarkable be it Maths, History, or getting to grips with spelling and mental arithmetic. I recall on one occasion his offering to teach us on a subject of our choice and enjoying 45 riveting minutes on astronomy and the central issue of gravity. The individual maths system which he devised

and supervised deserved publication one would have thought, with updates.

Annual events were the swimming sports day, cricket and teas at Richmond Hill and fireworks in November. Ingeniously devised headache relays finishing up in Trotters carpentry shed, again arranged by Carey Field to get the not so keen on sport involved, and cricket ball catching at graded distances to get team points.

I recall at a later date watching the amazing Mr Lansdown, who had instructed my mother in the Health and Beauty sessions of the 1920s, demonstrate at the swimming sports a hand stand at the age of 80. I think that he had only just retired as gym master at that time

Finally there was the Common Entrance exam to take up at Woodbourne where Mr. Price had tried to encourage in us boldness in drawing. Then for me off to Solihull at the end of the Coronation Year for a few more years of enjoyable school. After that St Mary's Hospital Medical school in London eventually becoming an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist based in Gloucestershire.

At the time one probably did not fully appreciate the idyllic background and experience to which that one had been lucky enough to have been introduced at WHS from the age of seven. Long may it continue!



“We hope you have fond memories at West House. What is your favourite memory here?”

ROGER MARCUSON (1950)

Oundle School

That's difficult as so many happy memories. Overall I think DT Cary Field was inspirational.

ALAN BROUGHTON TAYLOR (1951)

Malvern

Once I was praised by the Headmaster at Assembly for a good wicket-keeping performance the previous day! I also won the Hulme Cup once.

HUTCHISON JOHN DOUGLAS (1952)

George Dixon Grammar School and KES

Mr. Trotman carpentry classes.

IAN E DONOVAN (1953)

Leighton Park

Fellow class mates

RICHARD GUY HORNSBY CROFTS (1955)

Wrekin College

November 5th fireworks....my birthday... Football, Rugby, cricket and swimming and Mr Trotmans wonderful enthusiasm and teaching of woodwork and other skills which still pertain today.

RICHARD VICTOR WALLIS (1955)

Bromsgrove School

Being taught by a most exceptional man Dudley Cary Field

MICHAEL BIRD (1955)

Bromsgrove School

Playground hockey and archery.

“We hope you have fond memories at West House. What is your favourite memory here?”

GEORGE MEREDITH (1956)

Marlborough College

Time as a weekly boarder getting to know the other boarders and watching TV and the bound collection of old Punch magazines.

JOHN QUENTIN LARDGE (1956)

Solihull School

“They were good days. I can’t pick out academic or sporting achievements. I do recall at some point having an essay I had written pinned on the notice board because it did not contain a single bit of punctuation. I have just about recovered from the trauma of fellow pupils and teachers laughing at me and tend to overdo it now - !!!!.”

JOHN GUY RHODES (1958)

King Edward’s School

Field and Playground hockey: carpentry : long summer weekends : support from DT Carey Field

R IAN A GREEN (1960)

Rydal

Sailing my MTB (Trotman build) on the swimming pool. Mr Cooper boxing etc. Mr Pratt in general. Kunzle cakes occasionally. Miss Cottrell (English). Tidd Pratt sweating profusely. Mr Anderson, a kind and pleasant Kiwi. Finally, the lovely caring matron (?) - can’t recall her name, just now!

RICHARD JOHN PUSEY (1960)

Epsom College

Sports!

PETER DAVID BARNETT (1960)

Solihull School

Swimming.

RICHARD HARDINGHAM (1960)

King Edward’s School

The wonderful and nurturing environment that the school created for its pupils

ANTONY EXELBY LISTER (1963)

Sebright

Trotters Woodwork Shed. The one feature of the woodworking shed that I always found most amusing was that the answers to Trotter’s woodworking quiz that started the year were written in chalk on the face of one of the beams above the working area, some a little faint with time but there for all to all see. I still have one of the mini wooden Dachsund dogs and teapot stand that were popular items for us to construct.

MATTHEW WATERHOUSE (1964)

King Edward’s School

Making the model Roman rowing boat work again. Also the wood work classes and the games

DAVID JOHN WOMERSLEY REYNOLDS (1966)

Repton

Cricket 11 with Derriff Taylor and Mr Pratt. Roller skating!

KEITH JAMES BRUCE-SMITH (1966)

Oundle School

Enjoying a range of sports, including football, hockey, cricket, athletics and swimming

NEIL ALEXANDER JOHN CUTLER (1967)

Rugby School

To my astonishment, winning the Alden Cup for most house points in the last term of my last year.

DAVID JACKSON (1967)

Rugby School

Old friends !

NICHOLAS BAIRD (1968)

Repton

Close knit feel and accessibility to staff

ROBIN DYER (1972)

Wellington College

Playing sport

GERARD DAVIES (1973)

Ampleforth College

So many great memories if I have to pick one it was Anne Jones, local Wimbledon singles champion, teaching me how to grip a tennis racquet and what to do next she was lovely and I can still pop in an occasional ace! Others - Robert Selby and family and Nellie the dog at Woodbourne (we had one of her spaniel puppies) - long evenings messing about in the school grounds - cricket nets, football, archery and camping overnight in my tent from ‘Green shield stamps’. The amazing, eccentric English teacher Richard Ryder who inspired me in the subject David ‘Mozz’ Matthias who was a lovely man and great teacher. Many more “

GEOFFREY JOHN GREEVES (1973)

Sibford School

Playing marbles outside; archery in the lower playing field, cricket and footy.

“We hope you have fond memories at West House. What is your favourite memory here?”

HUW JAMES (1979)

Old Swinford Hospital School

I had a wonderful time at West House. I still have very clear fond memories and still maintain friendships with my fellow pupils from those days.

JAMES GITTINS (1980)

Uppingham

I had a fantastic time at West House School, loads of fond memories. Spartans, boarding in Woodbourne, playing cricket, camping on site, woodwork shop and swimming sports day, hectic hex, archery on the lower

GREGG SLACK (1981)

Denstone College and Millfield

My friends, who 40 years on, I still see. All have all done incredibly well in their chosen profession's. Kim and Sue Duce were instrumental in firing us forward to our next chapter of education.

BENEDICT RYAN (1985)

Ampleforth College

Remembrance services. Multi-skills inter-house competition. Boarders' walk

JASON COHEN (1987)

Tettenhall College

The skiing trip to Bordeaux amongst others.

HUGH HOUGHTON (1987)

King Edward's School

Musical productions (esp. the Pirates of Penzance, 1986 or 1987); the space shuttle flying over the lower field; woodwork in the shed by the swimming pool.

JAGDEEP GOGNA (1989)

The Royal Grammar School, Worcester

Halcyon memories of finishing school at 5.15pm (unlike my external peers) then across to the dormitory for piano lessons til 7pm - all as a day pupil.

MANSOOR NAWAZ BANGASH (1989)

King Edward VI Five Ways

The friends I made and the fun we all had while at WHS - the teachers, Mr & Mrs Duce (& Mr Duce junior), were all memorable

DARREN ORMSBY (1992)

Handsworth Grammar

Everything. Best time of my life. If I had to pick one thing it was captaining the football team to an undefeated season.

JARRAR KHAN (1993)

King Edward's School

Many fond memories

GURSIMRAN SINGH SIDHU (2004)

King Edwards VI Camphill School

Great fun on snow days and watching world cup games at school. Walking around the grounds to get to various classes etc. It felt a bit like being at Hogwarts at times with it's forbidden forest and all.

MUSA (2021)

King Edward's School

Sports day

KYLE ISMAIL (2022)

King Edward's School

Playing Sports - rugby, football, cricket

RHYS ISMAIL (2022)

King Edward's School

Playing Sports - rugby and cricket (7 wickets in a home match at Richmond Hill Playing Fields)

GIBRAN LAMBERT (2022)

King Edward's School

Throughout my time as a pupil at West House, I had so many enjoyable memories that I treasure to this day. It would be a disservice to pick just one, but to name a few; Fright Night, Miss Green's year 6 production, Enterprise day, milk and apples at break, the orchestra with Mr Laurence, the school dinners (and puddings!), being greeted by Debbie and Sabrina at Reception each morning, and the Smilton Covid fitness sessions. The school had a homely feel, like a family, and the grounds were lovely. All the teachers were so warm, fun and supportive - Mrs Gilbert, Mr Philps, Mr Price, Mr Smith, Mr Lyttle and everyone else, and I credit where I am now to them.

Obituaries

David Kunzle (1949)

David Kunzle passed away in March 2024 at the age of 87.

David was born in Birmingham to Swiss parents, Aline (nee Roesli) and her husband, Edward Kunzle, who worked for his family's confectionery firm.

Ed. Notes. I suspect the name was known to many WH boys as I believe Kunzle had a sweet shop up at Five Ways. – any information from readers welcome.

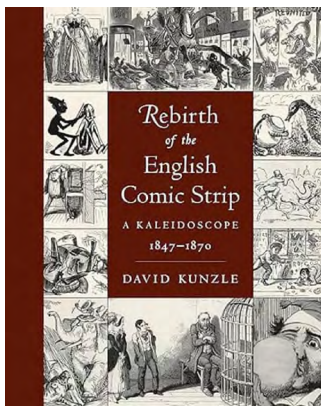
David spent six years at West House and followed his brother George (1946) to Oundle School, and then onto Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, where he studied French, German and literature.

From previous news stories in WHOBA magazines some readers will recall David was twice British Universities Combined Events Gymnastic Champion, before

obtaining a doctorate in art history from the Courtauld Institute in 1964. He used his PhD on Hogarth and his Antecedents in Pictorial Narrative as the foundation on which to write three books on the history of the comic strip, the first volume in 1973, the second in 2012 and the final one in 2021.

After his PhD David taught at the National Gallery in London, at the University of Toronto in Canada and at UC Santa Barbara in the US, before joining the department of art history at UCLA, where he remained for more than 30 years as a tenured professor.

As well as being well known for writing on the history of the comic strip, he had a wide range of work across many fields, including early modern Dutch and Flemish painting, 19th-century Swiss, French, German, English and North American graphics, Victorian and Edwardian clothing and fetishism, and 20th-century protest posters.



In all he wrote, edited, and/or translated 24 books and 150 essays. He also curated a dozen exhibitions that drew upon his fluency in Latin, German, Dutch, Schweizerdeutsch, French, Italian and Spanish.

David retired in 2009 and had time to come back to West House in that year, the first time he was back at 24 St James's Road since 1949, meeting Alistair Lyttle for a tour of the school.

In retirement David launched himself on to the stage, performing in a number of significant roles in local and regional theatres around Los Angeles.

He continued into his 80s to enjoy cycling, hiking, tennis and squash, along with occasional bouts of paragliding and bungee-jumping. A soft-Marxist, he also continued to delight in political discussion.

David is survived by his wife, Marjoyrie, a second cousin who shared his surname and whom he married in 1987.

Richard Arthur Adams MBE (1953)

Richard Adams passed away on 21st December 2024 after a short illness.

Richard is survived by his wife Jill, daughter Rosie, son Jonathan, and 6 much loved grandchildren, Hetty, George, Rose, Ed, TJ, and Benjy. Richard lived and worked in Birmingham all his life. He went to



West House School followed by Pangbourne College, where he gained a life-long interest in the Navy. He was a chartered accountant, qualifying at Impey Cudworth, and then working at Pepper Rudland & Co, Peat Marwick & Mitchell, returning to Peppers as a Partner, which became BDO Stoy Hayward. After he retired from practice, he applied his huge accounting experience to the manufacturing industry, working for Titgemeyer UK and Baker & Finemore. In 2012, Richard was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours "for voluntary service to SSAFA Forces Help in the West Midlands", the charity supporting Veterans, serving Soldiers & Families of the Armed Forces in our communities. He played an important role managing the finances for the West Midlands for over 40 years. Richard had many interests including history, steam engines and railways, stamp collecting, and motor sports, both modern Grand Prix and historic racing cars of all types. His favourite places included Oulton Park and Goodwood motor racing circuits.

Obituaries

Clive Stuart Naisby Smith (1957)

As was previously reported on the WHOBA section of the school website Clive Smith sadly passed away in late 2024.

Clive was a huge supporter of WHOBA, and an important figure in the history of the association, having joined the committee back in 1970, with roles including secretary and Chairman. With forty plus years of service to the association we thought we would reprint part of the letter Claire his wife kindly wrote to the school.

"I met Clive by chance, he moved from his parents' house in Birmingham to buy a house in Belbroughton, Worcestershire, with his friend Brian Senter, a fellow solicitor. At about the same time my parents and my younger sister, Helen, moved to nearby Hagley.

I happened to be at Edinburgh University at the time and, returning on holiday, found myself in a completely different setting. (Clive and I often joked that mum and dad intended to leave me behind in Birmingham! Not true to the best of my knowledge!)

My parents soon made friends with their neighbours, the Eames. Their daughter, Sally, who was at the time going out with Clive's housemate, Brian, became a good friend as we were roughly the same age. I was introduced to Clive and we hit it off straight away. Clive called round to meet my family and promised to see me again.

A little while later Clive was up a ladder working on his house and holding a blow torch. By chance my dad was looking at the antique shop next door. Clive spotted him, leapt down off the ladder, and pursued my father who was, as was his habit, walking faster and faster down the street. Breaking into a run, Clive attempted to catch up, finally managing to ask him to pass on a message to me that he would call round that night to take me out for a meal. Predictable my dad totally



forgot and, when Clive arrived to collect me, I had already eaten. In order not to disappoint him I managed to eat an omelette!!

Soon after I returned to university to continue with my studies and though we did not see each other for a while, we corresponded regularly. The letters still exist. Another long parting followed when I went to the College of Law to study to be a solicitor. Finally we married in September 1975 and have been together ever since.

Clive and I shared many interests, history, music, art, literature and much more. Enjoying holidays in Britain and abroad, visiting historic sites and gardens.

We loved France and Italy and I introduced Somerset, where my family had stayed on their way to Devon and Cornwall. We chose Glastonbury for our honeymoon in the days when it was a small town long before the famous festival."

Martin John Rutledge CB, OBE (1967)

Major General Martin we were informed by Hetty his wife, sadly passed away on 26th October 2025 after a very courageous fight against cancer.

After leaving WHS he went to Wycliffe College and then onto Hertford College Oxford.



He then joined the army and was commissioned into 9/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) of which he in 1994 became Commanding Officer (Lt-Colonel).

In 1996 he was awarded an OBE in the Special Operational Honours and later promoted to Colonel and then again to Brigadier in 1999.

Other appointments followed as Director Royal Armoured Corps, then Chief of Staff, Headquarters Adjutant General and in August 2007 he had become Kosovo Protection Corps Co-Ordinator with the rank of Major-General.

Martin was the son of John A Rutledge (1937) and brother to Guy (1969) and Michael (1973)

Martin is survived by his wife Hetty and a daughter Emily and son Jack.



West House Old Boys' Association

Financial Statement

Income and Expenditure Account			Balance Sheet	
For the 20 month period ended 31 August 2025			31-Aug-25	
12 months 2023 £	20 months 2025 £	31-Dec 2023 £		31-Aug 2025 £
Income			CURRENT ASSETS	
Annual subscriptions		610	Stock of Ties (£5.70 each)	120
86 Bankers Orders	172	7,550	Debtors	6,934
		32,000	Loan - WHS	32,000
		15,342	Cash on Current Account	15,509
Interest received			Cash on Deposit Account	
		55,501		54,562
86 Total income	172		CURRENT LIABILITIES	
		(2,888)	Creditors	
Miscellaneous		52,613		54,562
Donations	1,000		REPRESENTED BY:	
(444) (Loss)/profit on sale of ties and badges	(490)		Life subscriptions fund at 1 January 2023/ 1 January 2024	56,295
Profit on events		54,735	Life subscriptions received in 20 month period (54 @£65 each)	3,510
(444)	510	1,560		59,805
Expenditure		56,295	Accumulated fund as at 1 January 2023/ 1 January 2024	(3,682)
(81) Old boys archive digitisation	(2,233)		(Deficit)/Excess of income over expenditure for year	(1,561)
(1,307) Administration - postage & stationary	(5)	(1,876)		
(60) Bank charges	(5)			
(1,448)	(2,243)	(1,806)		
(1,806) (DEFICIT)/EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	(1,561)	52,613		54,562



West House

INDEPENDENT PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR BOYS

WHOBAMAGAZINE

ANNUAL REVIEW

2025

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