

CHB Alumni Newsletter

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Issue No.6 | Summer 2026



**KING EDWARD VI
CAMP HILL
SCHOOL FOR BOYS**

Educational excellence for our City

Welcome to the sixth edition of your CHB Old Edwardians newsletter



Iceland 2016

Dear Alumnus

It has been an inspiring and eventful year at CHB, and as we reach the end of the summer term, we continue to celebrate the strong bonds that connect our pupils, staff, and alumni. Throughout the year, we have been delighted to hear from so many of our former students, and we remain proud of the lasting relationships that grow long after pupils leave our classrooms.

We look forward to receiving updates from our Year 13 students who completed their A Level examinations this June and are now preparing to take their next steps. Many have secured places at prestigious universities, while others are beginning exciting apprenticeships and professional pathways. Whatever their chosen direction, we have every confidence that they will make a positive mark on the world.

This summer we also welcomed a new cohort of Year 7 pupils. Their energy, curiosity, and enthusiasm were evident throughout their Induction Day. We are confident that, come September, they will make valuable contributions and fully embrace the range of opportunities that CHB offers.

We extend our sincere thanks to our alumni who have supported Careers and Enrichment Events over the past year. Your involvement—whether through talks, mentoring, or sharing your professional journeys—continues to provide invaluable insight and inspiration for current students.

If you would like to arrange an individual visit or plan a reunion, please feel free to contact us. George Cookson and Peter Jack remain enthusiastic tour guides, always happy to welcome alumni back and share stories from across the decades.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this summer edition of the newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the updates, reflections, and achievements from across our community.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer—we look forward to seeing many more of you during the 2026–27 academic year.

Camp Hill School for Boys Development Office

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A CHB Legend

CHB is delighted to celebrate a special milestone as legend George Cookson marks his 80th birthday this coming September. A passionate rugby coach, George inspired generations of students both in the classroom and on the field, instilling discipline, teamwork and a lifelong love of the game. To discover more about his remarkable career and the memories he has helped create, don't miss his exclusive [four-page spread on pages 6 to 9](#).

Calling Classes of 1963, 1982, 1992-95

We are inviting leavers from the classes of **1963, 1982, and 1992–1995** to register their interest in joining separate reunion events for each group. If you would like to reconnect with your former classmates, please email the school so we can organise a special and memorable gathering.

Development Office: chbalumni@chb.kevibham.org

Headmaster's Welcome

Dear Camp Hill Old Edwardians

I am writing with great excitement and anticipation to let you know that two significant building projects at the school are making excellent progress with the new all-weather pitch nearing completion! You'll see from photos below that the Camp Hill Community Hub actually looks like a building, and in fact most of the remaining work required is on the interior. The pitch meanwhile looks tantalisingly close to being ready for use!



I can't believe how much progress we have made since I last wrote to you. Both of these projects are only possible due to the extraordinary hard work of our Development team, and the extensive generosity of many of the Camp Hill Old Edwardians. My huge thanks to everyone who has contributed in terms of your time, energy, support, expertise and money!

Given that this time last year we didn't even know if we could afford to build the pitch this project is a wonderful achievement and we are so excited that the students will be able to benefit from the excellent facilities that they deserve.

It is a good time for me to thank all of the Old Boys for your support in so many ways. Every little word of encouragement or message on socials means so much to us. Many of you have engaged with our work experience programmes, giving inspirational speeches to the students, running workshops, offering work experience placements, mentoring students, giving practice interviews. Many of you have come along to recent tours and reunions and met up with your old teachers, or attended our recent summer social or London drinks meeting. Many of you have contributed articles or pictures to this Alumni Newsletter. And many of you have gifted the school your hard-earned cash. All of this support is very much appreciated, and you will see the direct impact of your generous support within the pages of this newsletter, and even more obviously when you next visit the school.

Talking of school visits, we've had the pleasure of hosting scores of you over the last few months. My favourite thing is to show you around your Alma Mater and to introduce you to your former Masters. It's such a delight to host groups of Alumni and to see you reconnect, perhaps after years of absence, as if you had only been talking yesterday! Please do keep sending in your photographs, especially of your "meetings" in the Red Lion afterwards.

The school is going from strength to strength, both in terms of our Estate and our Community. Even though we are bigger than ever, there is still a wonderful family feeling about the place, and the students and staff still enjoy a huge array of extra-

curricular activities. We still win international academic competitions, and our performing arts offering is simply staggering. Sports are still strong, and will get stronger with our new pitch and changing rooms, and our students still achieve extraordinary progress in their GCSE and A-Level examinations. Camp Hill truly is a happy place to be.

But don't take my word for it. Get in touch with our Development Office and ask Lea for a visit, or a reunion tour, and come and see for yourself!

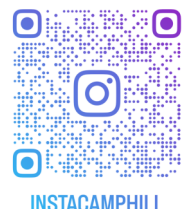
Russell Bowen MA (Cantab) NPQH
Headmaster



As you can see with the pictures above, work on the Camp Hill Community Hub has started.

If you would like to donate please find a link [here](#) or scan the QR code.

Keep up to date by following King
Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys
Instagram account @instacamphill



INSTACAMPHILL



KING EDWARD VI
CAMP HILL SCHOOL FOR BOYS



KING EDWARD VI
CAMP HILL
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

In pursuit of educational excellence for all

GRAND OPENING ALL-WEATHER PITCH

— EXHIBITION HOCKEY GAME AT 3.45PM —
AS PART OF THE CAMP HILL COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

Join us as we celebrate this exciting new
chapter for Camp Hill.



FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2026



2.45PM

OPENING DRINKS EVENT
Camp Hill School for Girls

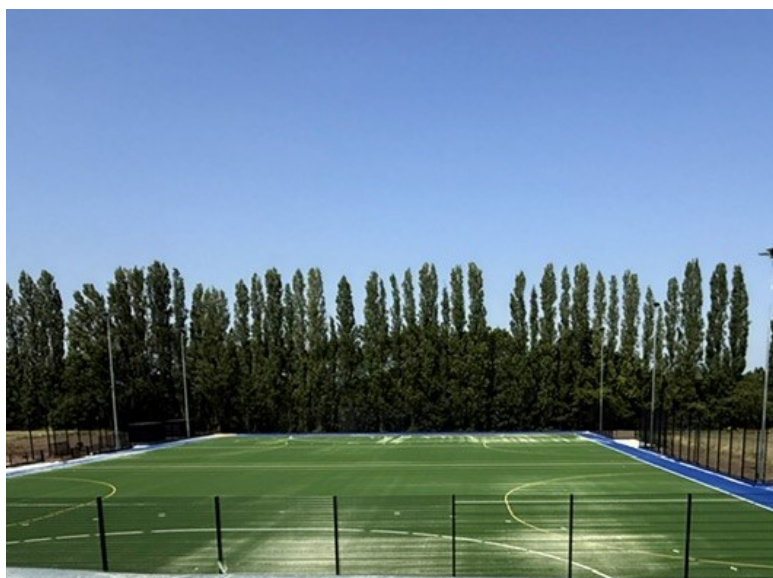


3.45PM

EXHIBITION HOCKEY GAME
& THE CUTTING OF THE RIBBON
All-Weather Pitch
Camp Hill School for Boys

We are keen to involve as
many alumni from both
Camp Hill School for Boys
and Camp Hill School for Girls
as possible in this
special occasion.

Please contact
development@chb.kevibham.org
for further details, or
to declare your availability
for the game.



Sign up here for the
Grand Opening of Our New All-
Weather Pitch



Eighteenth Birthday

Eighteen at last!
Alcohol is legal in the local pub.
A vote in the next election,
And adulthood is just around the corner...
But stop, turn back, remember;
Start with the idyllic hours in the nursery sandpits,
A lisping cherub, chasing knock-kneed boys, in the infant
playground,
The awful responsibility of school milk-monitor.
First day at secondary school—frightened and gullible
Before you knew the old, tried dodges
And awful towering mistresses.
Remember adolescence, searching for a true identity,
First job in a lifeless supermarket,
And impending 'A' levels.
Look back with affection—remember lessons learnt
As you walk towards the future.

R Greatrex U6

A Conundrum

My first is in Lesson, but never in French,
My second's in Chemistry it's found on the bench.
My third's in a Hole so deep you find
My fourth's in a Polo, the sound's found inside.
My fifth's a repeat of what's gone before,
It's never too late to open some door.
My last letter's long but my rhyme is complete,
The whole of my word is now at your feet.

T Huxtable

Development Office

Dear Alumnus

As always, it has been an exciting time at Camp Hill Boys since our Autumn Term newsletter! As the academic year ends, we're proud of our students' achievements and excited for the opportunities next year will bring.

Our long-awaited new building and all-weather pitch is finally becoming a reality after five years of determined work—see pages 2 and 3.

A while ago, I asked a handful of former staff and Old Boys to contribute a short paragraph wishing George Cookson a happy 80th birthday. What began as a modest idea quickly gathered momentum. More and more former staff and pupils came forward, each eager to share their memories, appreciation and affection for a man who had touched so many lives. Before long, I found myself inundated with tributes, anecdotes and heartfelt messages, culminating in an extraordinary five-page spread (pages 8-12).

It is a fitting testament to a truly remarkable individual. Legends are not measured solely by what they achieve, but by the respect they earn and the memories they leave behind. Through almost six decades of service, friendship and unwavering dedication, George has created a legacy that continues to inspire generations of Camp Hill boys, past and present. Quite simply, George's story is woven into the very fabric of Camp Hill itself.

Happy 80th Birthday, George — a true Camp Hill legend.

A quick heads-up: Microsoft Publisher is being discontinued, our next newsletter may look a little different as we transition to new tools. We'll keep the content you love — just with a fresh layout. Thanks for sticking with us!

Lea (Leanne Beckett)

Development Manager & Pastoral Support
chbalumni@chb.kevibham.org

Call for Articles

Dear Readers

The CHB Alumni Newsletter is shared with all registered alumni, governors, donors, and friends of the school. For future editions, we warmly invite you to contribute articles reflecting on your time at Camp Hill Boys.

- ◇ Your full name
- ◇ The year you left the school
- ◇ Your current/former career
- ◇ Your best memory of CHB
- ◇ Teachers who made an impact
- ◇ The influence the learning has had on your career

Please share with us your thoughts and ideas. We welcome contributions from all over the world!

Please send your articles to the following email address:
chbalumni@chb.kevibham.org



QUAIFE BROS. AND LILLEY,
THE
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LARGE STOCK OF
Cricket Bats,
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At Lowest Prices.
CRICKET TROUSERS
from 6/11 per Pair.
CRICKET SHIRTS
from 3/- each.
Cricket Caps & Blazers
a Speciality.
Tennis Rackets
from 6/6.
RACKETS
RESTRUNG
from 4/6 each.
GROQUET SETS
from 16/6.
Special Terms to CAMP HILL OLD EDWARDIANS.
ILLUSTRATED LIST POST FREE.
313, BROAD ST., BIRMINGHAM.

Camp Hill Old Edwardian's Magazine—May 1910

Camp Hill War Memorial



The First World War memorial arch of King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys was erected to commemorate former pupils who lost their lives during the Great War. The memorial was unveiled and dedicated on 13 June 1921 and originally stood at the school's Stratford Road site in Camp Hill, Birmingham. It served both as a place of remembrance and as a symbolic gateway, reminding pupils and staff of the sacrifices made by earlier generations.

Architecturally, the memorial took the form of a substantial brick archway. It featured a tall pointed internal arch, decorative iron gates, and a triangular shouldered pediment above. A raised stone panel bore the inscription 'IN MEMORIAM', while the dates '1914' and '1919' were displayed on the façade, marking the span of the First World War. The overall design was solemn and restrained, in keeping with the commemorative style adopted by many British school memorials after the war.



The memorial arch was accompanied by name plaques recording those former pupils who had fallen. In total, 135 Old Boys of Camp Hill were commemorated for their service and sacrifice in the First World War. These plaques were an integral part of the memorial, ensuring that individual names and lives were remembered, rather than the conflict being marked only in abstract terms.

In 1956, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys moved from its original Stratford Road premises to a new site on Vicarage Road in Kings Heath. At that time, the memorial plaques were carefully relocated to the new school buildings so that the names of the fallen would remain at the heart of school life. The arch itself, however, remained at the former site.

In later years, the memorial arch fell into partial decline. By the early twenty-first century, the upper section of the structure had been dismantled, leaving only the lower portions and ironwork. Although the arch no longer survives in its original form, photographic records preserve its appearance and significance.



Today, the surviving memorial plaques continue to play an important role in remembrance at Camp Hill. In addition to the First World War names, later plaques were added to commemorate Old Boys who died in the Second World War. Together, these memorials form a lasting link between past and present generations of Camp Hill pupils, reflecting the school's long tradition of service and remembrance.

Links: [Imperial War Museum](#)

[War Memorials](#)

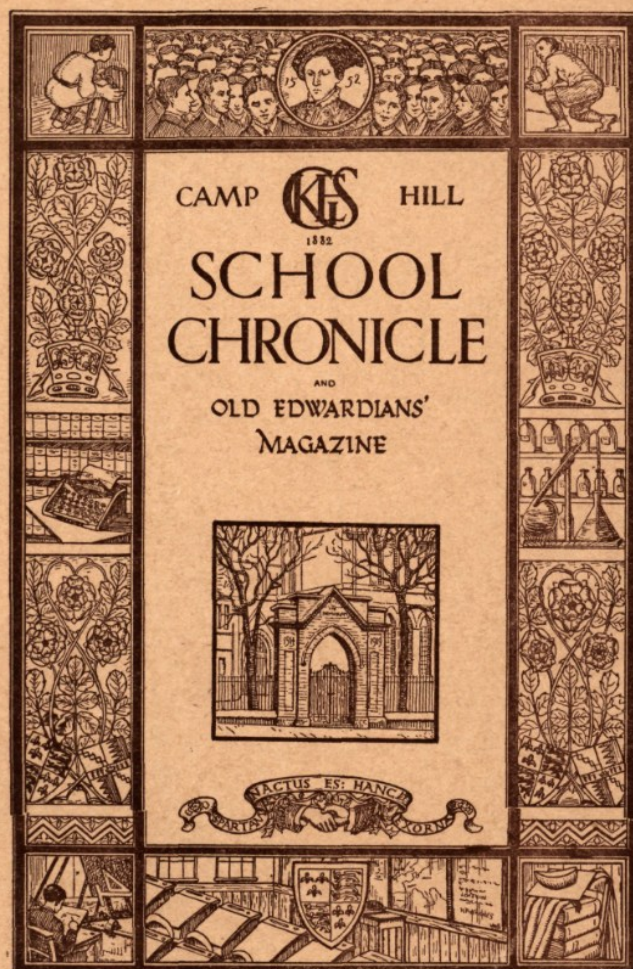
Leanne Beckett



First XV rugby team c. 1890s, the oldest photograph on record



2025-26—this years first team, a lot more smiles here...



If you would like to look at old copies of Vivat and the Chronicle check out the Foundation Archives below:

www.kingedwardvi-camphillforboys-archives.org

Calling all alumni - join us via the CHB Alumni registration page and keep in touch:

www.camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

The Camp Hill Boys School alumni webpage has been updated to include links to school news and activities that may be of interest to former pupils. Over time, we hope to build an expanding archive of material that will appeal to Camp Hill Old Edwardians of every generation.

If you're a former student or staff member, we'd love for you to register your details and help us bring the CHB community together. If each person invites one or two fellow alumni to join, we'll quickly grow an even stronger network.

We also post regular updates on LinkedIn, so keep an eye out for upcoming reunions and events!



Louis Bailey—Year 11 (*Chronicle* 2022)

**Follow King Edward VI
Camp Hill School for Boys
on social media**



Uncovering a Camp Hill Mystery

Sometimes the most fascinating pieces of school history arrive not from the archives, but from a family attic.

Earlier this year, Ms Whateley contacted the Development Office with a simple but intriguing question. She had discovered a sports cap that once belonged to her grandfather, Harold M Wood, and hoped to learn more about its origins. The cap bore the initials 'CHOE', but its sporting significance – and the story behind it – remained a mystery to her.

Former members of staff were quick to lend their expertise which was relayed back to Ms Whateley. One explained that CHOE, was back in Harold Wood's day an Old Boys' rugby club rather than the open club it is today. Both rugby and cricket teams operated under the Camp Hill Old Edwardian's name, although the cap was most likely awarded for rugby.



It was suggested that such caps were often presented when a player made their first-team debut, a tradition that would place Harold at Camp Hill during the late 1900s. While no reference to an H M Wood has yet been found on the school colours boards from that period, further clues soon emerged.

In the school's Centenary Book, the 1913–14 rugby season – a challenging one with only four wins – includes a promising note about 'plenty of young talent coming into the team,' naming H Wood among the backs. If caps were indeed awarded on debut, this could explain both the cap and its excellent condition.

Adding to the story, Georgina later uncovered a photograph of a rugby team believed to include Harold Wood. In the image, Harold appears second from the left on the front row, with his brother Fred possibly standing third from the left on the back row (excluding the man in the hat). The photograph offers a rare and personal glimpse into a Camp Hill rugby side from over a century ago.



The search for confirmation continues, with plans to consult the Camp Hill Rugby Club archivist for further insight. In the meantime, this story is a wonderful reminder of how alumni and their families help keep CHB's sporting heritage alive—one cap, one photograph, and one question at a time.

If you have photographs, memorabilia, or stories connected to Camp Hill's past, we would love to hear from you.

Leanne Beckett

A Lifetime of Service: Celebrating George Cookson at 80



In September 2026, our school community will celebrate a truly remarkable milestone: George Cookson's 80th birthday. For generations of boys who have passed through Camp Hill's gates, George has been far more than a master, coach, or organiser. He has been a constant presence, a source of energy, and an enduring embodiment of the school's spirit. George's association with the school spans decades, and his contribution to its sporting life, particularly rugby, has been nothing short of extraordinary. Few individuals can claim to have shaped so many young lives over such a sustained period, and even fewer can say they continue to do so well into their ninth decade.

One of George's greatest legacies lies in the school's Senior Rugby Tour and Junior Rugby and Hockey Tour, which he helped to establish, nurture, and expand into a cherished tradition. He first started the Senior Tour in 1974, with fixtures against Whitehaven, Austin Friars, and Queen Elizabeth Hexham.

Matches that set the tone for what would become an enduring and much-loved feature of school life. These tours were never simply about results; they were about camaraderie, resilience, and the broadening of horizons.

Just three years later, in 1977, George led his first junior tour to his home town of Carlisle. Amazingly, he has returned to Carlisle with the Junior Tour every year since, barring the unfortunate Covid years! That continuity speaks volumes not only about George's commitment and dedication but also about the relationships he has built and maintained over nearly half a century. He is the man every school remembers, he knows everybody on every fixture (or their brother, or their cousin, and he played rugby against them once...) and it is his relationships that have kept us going back to Carlisle every year and seen us welcomed with such warmth and generosity. Remarkably, George also found the time to accompany the annual ski trip for many years, alongside his steadfast support on the St David's rock-climbing trips over an equally long period. No doubt there are other trips we have unintentionally overlooked, but this offers a clear sense of his unwavering dedication and outstanding contribution to school life.

To have been involved in over 100 Junior and Senior Tours is an achievement no other member of CHB staff can match, but what makes George's story even more inspiring is that it is not one confined to the past. Even as he approaches his 80th birthday on 21st September 2026, he remains an active and valued presence in the school. There is nobody quite like George, and he brings a particular brand of schoolboy humour not just to school sports, but also to the school staff room whenever he comes in!

Every Wednesday afternoon, he can still be found leading fitness sessions for senior students, instilling the same discipline, determination, and good humour that have characterised his approach for decades. It is no small feat to command the respect of teenage boys across multiple generations, yet George has achieved this with apparent ease. On Saturdays, George continues to lend his support whenever needed at school rugby fixtures and he remains an integral part of the school's rugby culture. His commitment serves as a powerful example to both staff and pupils alike, that dedication to a shared endeavour need not diminish with time.

George's passion for rugby extends well beyond the school environment. He remains a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of both Camp Hill Rugby Club and Moseley Rugby Club, two institutions deeply embedded in the local rugby community and in our wider school community. This broader engagement reflects the depth of his love for the game and his belief in its values: teamwork, respect, perseverance, and community. Many former pupils will recognise how these values were instilled in them under his guidance and have carried forward into their own lives.

For many Old Boys, memories of school are inseparable from memories of George: the early morning departures for tour, the mud and laughter of Saturday matches, the steady encouragement from the sidelines, and the quiet insistence on giving one's best. As he reaches this milestone birthday, the school community, past and present, has much to celebrate and even more for which to be grateful. George Cookson represents the very best of what a schoolmaster and coach can be: dedicated, spirited, and unwaveringly committed to the development of his pupils.

On behalf of all staff and students, old and new, we offer him our warmest congratulations on his 80th birthday and our sincere thanks for a lifetime of service; here's to a 50th anniversary tour to Carlisle in 2027!

Happy Birthday, George.

Tom Burgess (Head of PE and Games)

Rugby Tours 1983—2015

Having arrived at CHB in January 1983 and taking charge of the U13 team for the remainder of that season, (Pearce, Reynolds, Bailey and co) I was casually approached by George Cookson who asked what was I doing during the half term break? I should have sensed then that there was an alternative angle for that enquiry because I was immediately 'signed up' for the Senior Rugby Tour based in Carlisle.

It was extremely cold and the pitch at Austen Friars was rock hard but it was decided to go ahead and play. After numerous injuries the match was ended earlier than expected by the referee who, wisely, decided that enough was enough. No problem, there was always the next match at Wigton the following day. Arriving there it was decided to play a challenge football match rather than rugby. This match was also prematurely ended due to there being not enough players, from either side, fit enough to continue. All good fun but we needed a bigger first aid kit in my opinion.

Some years later we sent our 'Junior Tour' to play a fixture in Middlesborough. We found ourselves playing on a football pitch, but Camp Hill boys are noted for their ability to adapt, we eventually won 24-6 and 4-1. Unfortunately, on the return journey to Carlisle, all the players noted that there was a spare seat in the minibus. Returning to the venue we found the boy concerned fast asleep in the changing room, unaware that he came very close to spending a cold and hungry night, all alone, in darkest Middlesborough. Not a pleasant thought at all!

So, there we were heading off to Carlisle via the M6. On the Aston Expressway, the other two mini buses passed us on the outside lane and clearly the idiots driving weren't concentrating because they missed the M6 North turning. Not to worry; they'll soon realise this mistake and sort out things. I thought. We were well past Manchester and still no sight of the others when the U15 Captain asked me how long would it be before we arrived in Newcastle! "Why do want to go to Newcastle" I asked. "Because that's where we ae staying for the tour", was the reply. "Blimey", I thought. Or words to that effect. A quick turn off at J31, over the Pennines via Skipton and Harrogate and join the M1N to Geordie land. Easy! Except that I had been awarded the privilege of driving the worst mini bus in existence. The red Leyland Daff, with a 1.5 litre engine and headlights with about 2.5 candle-power combined, crossing the Pennines's in a howling gale with 14 kids who hadn't a clue where we were going or whether we would ever get there! 2.5 hours later, by sheer driver skill and an unerring directional memory we arrived at the Swallow Gateshead Hotel. Dinner was, of course, well finished but I expected sandwiches etc for the boys. But no. Nothing. Kitchen staff had done and locked up because it was just after midnight. I was not amused.

Some of you will remember meeting George's twin brother, Howard. Howard is a keen fell walker and is associated with the Blencathra Hunt. These hounds are large and not to be lightly taken for granted. So, when we were invited to see Blencathra at the beginning of a hunt, we made a detour to the kennels and waiting for the dogs to be released. Somehow, there was a mis-communication and I found myself confined within the area where the dogs were gathered. So there I stood whilst 30 odd, ravenously hungry hounds (they hadn't been fed for 24 hours !!) headed straight at me whilst all the other spectators, including boys who were eager to see the entertainment, stood safely outside the sturdy fence. One of the locals, saw me and shouted... "just stand perfectly still and don't move anything or say anything", I couldn't do either as I was totally petrified and the hounds were shoving me from all angles. It was then that I realised fast how big they were and even more frightening was the size of their jaws and rows of very sharp teeth, dripping with saliva. Fortunately, the

gate was opened and the alpha male ran out followed by the pack. I was so relieved that it took me a few seconds to realise that I was safe but very shaken. George's reaction was to ask if I was ok to referee the afternoon match, adding that those dogs were 'softies' compared to the potential spectators at the rugby match later on. Cheers George. I thought then that I could always outrun any spectators but those dogs, no way. Happy days; the tour was a success and I've milked that episode many times with varying results!!



The photograph (Scott Mitchell) perfectly sums up the end of a perfect last night on Senior Rugby Tour. Joking apart, Geoge organised numerous Rugby Tours over more that 50 years and never actually 'lost' any boys. I'm sure that hundreds of boys will remember fondly the experiences, both on and off the field of play and thank him for being willing and able to do just that, cheers Geoge!!

Phil Carman (2012)

CHB Legend

Regarding GHC, what can I say that others have not already. Legend is a word most suitable here though, more so than for any other CHB teacher I can think of. I was fortunate to work with George for a number of years and he was such a supportive, reliable and helpful bloke. The tours are of course well documented I'm sure, he always put the boys first. He was such good company too.

My most abiding memory will be this. The Headmaster who appointed me (Mervyn Brooker) warned me that I was inheriting an "awkward/difficult" member of the PE dept. George had not got on well with my predecessor. You can imagine how I felt coming in to work with someone 15 years my senior and so much a part of the fabric. He could not have been more accommodating to me as I moved to the school and eventually to Bromsgrove with my family (girls only 4 and 2 years old!!)

I have much to thank him for in making my 25 years at CHB so enjoyable and am happy that we remain good friends.

Mark Duncan



I joined Camp Hill in September 2002 and remember entering a world of tradition, academic excellence, boys school hierarchy, and a world of many colourful characters without whom the school simply wouldn't be the same. George Cookson was the embodiment of three of the four (I won't say which) and he left a lasting impression on me and a number of my classmates.

My first encounter with 'Cookson' as he was known by us boys, was in the school corridor on what I think was my second day of school. He

scanned me from head to toe then remarked in his Carlisle accent 'you're tall', 'do you play rugby' and when I remarked 'yes' said 'good' then walked off. Whilst he was coming towards the end of his coaching days during our tenure, there was no doubt that George was the embodiment of Camp Hill rugby. If the rugby team, or any team for that matter lost he was one of the teachers you'd genuinely fear telling and await the inevitable 'what happened!?' He taught chemistry, and whilst I remember little of what he taught I do remember 'incomplete combustion,' because of how often he bellowed it and how often we repeated it back to him trying to replicate his accent, which he seemed to enjoy.

He seemed to spend much of his time in the tower by the art block, rumour has it participating in yoga with his fellow stalwart Phil Carman.

I'll finish by saying George is a Camp Hill legend. An endearing curmudgeon of a teacher who belonged to a different era of teachers, who taught a different generation of boys. The school's reputation is built on academic prowess, but it is teachers like George who made the school what it was and makes me look back on my time fondly. If I'm honest, I thought you were close to 80 all those years ago, have a very happy birthday George and here's to many more. I look forward to a coffee in Kings Heath when I'm next in town.

Cameron Fraser (2009)

Mr Cookson is not merely a teacher but a beacon whose light continues to guide countless students for nearly six decades

Camp Hill Boys School has a proud rugby tradition built on teamwork, commitment, and excellence. As we celebrate the 80th birthday of Mr George Cookson, we are launching a special fundraising campaign to support future rugby tours and create lasting memories for our players.

Since joining Camp Hill Boys in 1967, Mr Cookson has inspired generations of pupils through his dedication to teaching, sport, and the values that define our school. His passion for rugby and commitment to student development have left an enduring legacy, making it fitting that this campaign is launched in his honour.

Funds raised will help provide 1st XV Rugby Captains' Blazers to recognise leadership, commitment, and achievement, as well as rugby tour holdalls, pin badges, and cufflinks that celebrate the experience of representing Camp Hill and create lifelong memories for those involved.

Rugby tours provide much more than competitive fixtures. They develop confidence, leadership, teamwork, resilience, and lifelong friendships. Your support will help ensure that more pupils can benefit from these valuable experiences while preserving the proud traditions of Camp Hill rugby.

At the same time, every donation serves as a tribute to Mr Cookson's extraordinary contribution to our school community over nearly six decades.

We invite parents, alumni, staff, and friends of Camp Hill Boys School to support this special campaign. Every contribution, large or small, will help future generations of Camp Hill rugby players create memories, represent their school with pride, and continue the legacy that George Cookson has helped build.

Help us celebrate a remarkable teacher, coach, and mentor by investing in the future of Camp Hill Rugby.

To donate a one off gift or set up a regular donation, scan the QR code or click the link below:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/king-edward-vi-camp-hill-school-for-boys-rugby>



The irreplaceable George...



LEAVING A LEGACY

Regardless of the size, legacy gifts are vital in helping charities like The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham to be able to continue their work in investing in top quality education and facilities meeting the needs of our future generations. After providing for your family and friends you may wish to leave a charitable gift in your will to support the continued development of CHB.

KEEP IN TOUCH

We're always keen to keep in touch with the Camp Hill School for Boys alumni community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.

Please email: chbalumni@chb.kevibham.org with your news

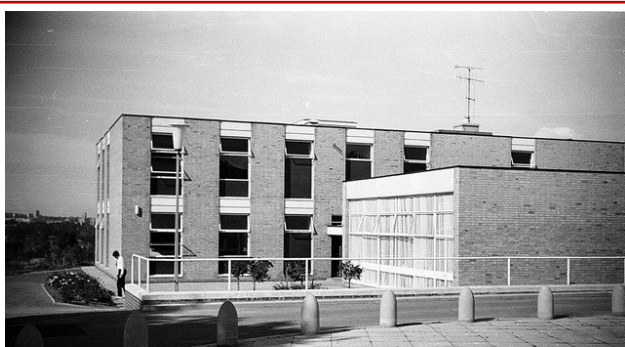
Camp Hill Old Edwardians Return



Ciaran Fitzpatrick (2014) wrote an article for the last newsletter. In December he came back to CHB for a tour with Nathan Hill. They had a lot to catch up on, he bumped in to many of his former teachers.



David Jones (1976) visited the school in May with his wife. They enjoyed a tour with Peter who remembers him well. David has written an article, read how he felt returning to his school 50 years after he left on page 13.



Ian Hartland wrote an article in Newsletter No.5 and sent in more black and white photographs.

Some photographs I took during my last day at school in 1971:

- * The sixth form block
- * School gymnasium photographed from the sixth form block
- * The Fives' courts
- * Girls' playground across "No Boy's Land"
- * Common Room inside the sixth form block



Refer A Friend

We know that many of you are still in contact with friends that you made whilst at Camp Hill. We really want our Alumni network to grow and thrive so please consider passing on the link below to our sign-up page so that they can join the growing network too. [King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys - Alumni \(camphillboys.bham.sch.uk\)](https://camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

Class of 2001 25-year Reunion and Alumni Open Day

Saturday 11 July 2026



More articles to follow in the next alumni newsletter...



Adrian Phillips

I am immensely fortunate to have had two quite different careers and what I learned at Camp Hill between 1968 and 1975 was central to both of them. Each showed in their individual ways how your school education can affect your whole life, directly and positively. Three long-serving members of staff in particular helped make the Camp Hill experience as enriching as it was. Most important I enjoy(ed) each to the full and there is no greater blessing than to take pleasure from what you do for a living.

I was taught modern languages – French by Dennis Marsden (1955–1985) and German by the incomparable Stan Feast – I went on to study them both at Trinity College, Cambridge. Stan arranged an eye opening summer for me working at the town library at Husum in north Germany where he had excellent contacts through the twinning with Kidderminster, this was the start of learning to speak the language as an everyday tool which was every bit as valuable as academic knowledge.



Little did I suspect that playing on the school team in the computer simulation Business Game promoted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and ICL Ltd would pay dividends when I found work as an investment analyst in the City of London. By great good fortune I had just began working when the removal of Exchange Controls freed British funds to invest where they wanted including Continental Europe. This was long before the English language acquired its universal dominance in business, so it was a vital advantage to speak the language of the countries where pension funds wanted to invest and to be able to advise them, not only about the corporate numbers but about local culture as well. The twenty five years which I spent in financial

markets showed me how rapidly and completely they can evolve, constantly throwing up opportunities to be taken if you've got the imagination and the skills – sometimes unexpected and unpredictable – required.

Mike Southworth inspired a passion for history that became my lifelong hobby. Twenty years ago I went to the next step and returned to university – Birmingham this time – to do a postgraduate master's in history. There was no specific career path in mind but I came across a fascinating and unexplored corner of mid-twentieth century British history which led me to propose a book to a publisher. That first book was published ten years ago and I'm now working on my sixth.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Adrian's books

Adrian Phillips (1975)



**Gary Green
(1975)**

From Northfield to North Carolina

From his schooldays at Camp Hill to leading one of the world's largest food and support services organisations in North Carolina, Camp Hill Old Edwardian Gary Green has built a career defined by leadership, discipline, and international impact.

Gary attended King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys between 1968 and 1975, where he quickly distinguished himself both academically and through sport. A committed and talented rugby player, he represented the 1st XV and was later appointed Tudor House Captain—a role that reflected not only his sporting ability, but also the leadership qualities that would come to define his professional life. His love of the game continued beyond school, going on to represent Camp Hill RUFC, maintaining a lifelong connection to the sport and the values it instils.

Gary joined Compass Group PLC in 1987, beginning a career that would span nearly four decades. At the time, Compass Group's headquarters were based in Northfield, Birmingham, creating a fitting local connection between Gary's early professional life and the city in which he had been educated. That journey would ultimately take him across the Atlantic, as he rose through senior leadership roles within the organisation.

In 1999, Gary was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Compass Group North America, a position he held with distinction until his retirement in 2024. He also served as a member of the Compass Group executive board, playing a central role in shaping the strategic direction of the global business. Under his leadership, Compass Group North America continued to thrive as part of the world's largest food and support services company, delivering services across education, healthcare, business and industry, sports and leisure, and defence. His guiding philosophy of "no complacency" helped embed a culture of high standards, continuous improvement, and accountability across a complex international organisation.

Gary's professional impact has been widely recognised. In 2001, he received an honorary doctorate from Johnson & Wales University in recognition of his contribution to education and the foodservice sector. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and the Hotel and Catering International Management Association, highlighting the breadth of his professional expertise. His leadership has also earned major industry honours, including the Silver Plate Award for Foodservice Management from the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA) and a Golden Chain Award from Multi-Unit Foodservice Operators (MUFSO).

Alongside business, rugby has remained a formative influence. Gary spent time in South Africa, where the sport's emphasis on teamwork, resilience, and shared responsibility left a lasting impression—principles that clearly translated into his approach to leadership throughout his career.

Most recently, Gary's outstanding contribution has been recognised with the award of an CBE, conferred for services to international business, industry and the UK economy. Appointed in his capacity as former Group Chief Operating Officer, North America, Compass Group, and Business Advisor, the honour reflects not only the scale of his leadership, but also the wider economic and professional impact of his work across borders.

From Camp Hill to the global stage, Gary Green's story is a powerful example of how the foundations laid at school—leadership, teamwork, and ambition—can underpin a lifetime of international achievement.



I am sure we have all been there. Just retired, trying to have a general clear out of old papers when there it was... Maths A level homework that should have been handed in over 49 years ago!!

Ongoing OCD issues prevented me from simply discarding the same, BUT, how best to get it back into school without facing any adverse consequences? My initial hope that I might be able to nonchalantly wander in through the Cartland Road entrance were thwarted by Colditz-like fencing, ill-informed builders and an intercom system that didn't appear to be connected to the outside world.

My hopes were dashed of being able to sneak past the sports pavilion (if indeed that is what it still is : initially the tuck shop in my day), tunnel under the fives courts (which appear now to have been hit for six) and casually leave the partially completed homework on top of one of the lockers outside what would have been one of the science labs.

No! Instead, I was forced to face the ignominy of the walk of shame up the main school driveway, into the main entrance and through the doors I had never had the fortune or misfortune (as the case may be) of venturing through during my stay at Camp Hill : 1969-1976. If I thought my problems were over at that stage I was sadly mistaken...

Not only had the school (and in particular Pete Jack) not forgotten about the matter, but he was actually at the doors to meet me under the pretence of an old boy reunion visit. I tried to run with it as far as I felt able and (having brought my wife along with me for moral support and safeguarding purposes) started by pointing out to her the library, (which was no longer the library) and the gym, which was no longer the gym. This became a familiar theme over the next couple of hours.

At one point we were invited to venture onto the hallowed turf of the staff room.

Here I confess to a momentary lapse and reminisced fondly about the idea of my English Literature master and good friend Johnny Cleak, relaxing with a coffee and The Times crossword. My long-held belief that most of the senior masters were Time Lords sadly proved unsustainable, following the realisation that there was actually a rear access!

Thankfully some things hadn't changed...

The school hall seemed much the same, as did the dreaded lectern I stood at all those years ago for Howard house assemblies. Sadly the trophy shelf seemed as sparse as it had done in my day.

The bank down to the sports field seemed smaller than I remembered. BUT, oh for those hallowed days of being able to stand at the top and try to block the train spotters from running across the field for a momentary glimpse of a Brush Type (4) Bo Bo or such like.

At one point (as we reached the swimming pool) I wondered whether there might be scope for me to make a run for it? Sadly the distant memory of the late Jerry Thain's, 'Four teams : Go !' kept me in check.

I sought refuge in the dining room, (tracked myself down on a school photo) but found myself being ridiculed on my production of what I had hoped might be a still valid 'dinner ticket'. Again (it would appear) a thing of the past.

Gone was the 'Sherrin !' reference afforded to all First Years : admittedly (in some cases) deservedly, when one or two parents thought it would be helpful to send their son to his first day at grammar school in short trousers !

Also gone were the Rolls of Honour that were originally housed on the corridor walls. Although I could see these had now been relocated to the hall and placed at a height that would make them close to impossible to review. Might it be cynical for me to surmise that these still deemed non-graduate professionals as not worthy of record : close on 40 years in private practice (local Solicitor) would perhaps suggest this approach inequitable.

As for Pete Jack : memories came back of a rosy cheeked new boy on the teaching staff, roaring up the school drive on his Moulinex 125 and walking around the school with a small cardboard box of chalk balanced carefully on his outstretched hand. Sadly he had no recollection of one of my very few anecdotal school report memories 'David has flashes of excellence', leading me to doubt whether this had actually ever happened.

As for the Camp Hill boys of 2026 : couple of tips :

: smarten yourselves up - untucked shirts and undone ties appeared to be the norm.

: show some respect : we were shown round by, what I hope is now our good friend Pete Jack, the longest serving member of staff - please learn to show respect to teachers when passing them in corridors.

Remember, you are privileged to represent a long tradition of Camp Hill scholars : visitors to the school should leave feeling they have witnessed a solid traditional grammar school, with the presentation and respect it deserves.

My thanks to Pete Jack and Lea for helping to make it a most enjoyable return.

David Warren Jones (1976)

The year was 1992, Meatloaf was doing anything for love, the number 11 bus had orange seats and I thought carrying a briefcase to school would make me cool. They called me the suntan kid having recently returned from a family holiday to Spain. Soon that turned into “Chippenblob,” an affectionate title influenced by my tanned, slightly portly appearance, gelled hair and the popular male stripper show. Pretty soon, they just called me Gordi and that seemed to stick for the next seven years.

I recall being thrust into the A team (not the TV show, sadly) because I was strong. The trouble was I didn’t like mud or messing my hair up. That being said, I managed to play rugby for the entire duration of Camp Hill in the top team and I am pretty sure I never got any mud on me. My passion, however, was drama. I have fond memories of prancing around the stage in musicals such as The Boyfriend, Dracula Spectacular and Grease. It was also much easier to infiltrate the girls school than standing on the neutral territory at lunchtime.

Lessons were ok. Most of the time I remember thinking about what was for tea, but some of them resonated. I particularly enjoyed music and singing the Bare Necessities from the Jungle Book. Anything more complex than that made me zone out, but I still managed to do pretty well in my GCSEs and A Levels, so I guess something stuck.

Possibly one of my favourite memories of school happened off campus. The formation of the infamous “Balti Club.” Oh yes, that was an actual thing. I decided to start it on the last day of term in our 2nd year and invite only the coolest cats to The Royal Naweed after school on Woodbridge Rd in Moseley. Amidst a sea of Balti Chicken Tikka, pilau rice and poppadoms, we began a tradition that some of us still partake in to this day. Balti was and still is the spicy glue that binds the class of 1999 together.

It may come as no surprise that when I left Camp Hill and went to university, I stopped playing rugby and during freshers week, gravitated to the most female populated society, musical theatre. Whilst reading Commerce at the University of Birmingham, I didn’t do much reading, mainly singing and dancing (amongst other things). Subsequently, I went to drama school in London and did another degree in Performing Arts. I worked as an actor for a couple of years in some tours, pantomimes and other random bits, but I decided to get a proper job.

I fell into recruitment and after a few years working with large multinational clients, I joined EY and transitioned into Early Careers. I went on to run their UK operation attracting and hiring 2000 students a year across apprenticeships, internships and graduate programmes. I’ve since worked for several other large organisations managing global teams and recruiting Early Careers talent from the best institutions all over the world. I’m frequently asked to speak on panels and at conferences on the topic. I’m fortunate enough to enjoy what I do and would suggest that a lot of my success has been down to my ability to connect with others, communicate with impact and lead teams through building trust, as well as inspiring them with a common vision. I believe I built the foundation for these skills at Camp Hill by being around some of the best people I’ve ever known, being challenged to think differently and experiencing an environment that encourages students to be the best version of themselves.

So, by day, I am a corporate executive with a global remit and by night, I still regularly perform. I suppose that makes me some kind of superhero. They don’t call me “Chippenblob” anymore, but perhaps Birmingham’s answer to Frank Sinatra 🎵

James Gordanifar (1999)



**Richard
Smith**

"It's not the destination, it's the journey"
RW Emerson

My journey in September 1972 began at the number 11 bus stop in Selly Oak. Accompanied by my irate mum I'd been marched across the park - a rather nervous, near reluctant boy - unsure of what awaited.

At my junior school in Weoley Castle a small group of us had been singled out to sit the 11 plus. I passed, but I had little idea of what that meant. Just before leaving the school, my teacher remarked that 'I was going to the best school in town', the mysterious sounding Camp Hill. My maternal grandmother, upon hearing the news, offered not congratulations but a 'who the hell does he think he is'. It was all rather puzzling.

Upon arrival at Camp Hill I was overawed and apprehensive, I had no idea what to expect. Some boys seemed posh, many were clever, some were posh and clever. My initial reaction - help! I felt scared, a fish out of water. A sherring indeed.

However, with a good few bumps along the way, the years passed by with a semblance of success. First, a clutch of decent 'O' levels, then 'A' levels, and plenty of first team rugby. By osmosis the mantra of working hard playing hard had penetrated even my thick skull!

After school I took a Degree in History and Politics - success of sorts, but I wanted something else. From the mid 1970's I had been obsessed with photojournalism, the sort of photography seen on the pages of The Sunday Times Magazine and The Observer Magazine. In my early 20's, as a young graduate, I knew that I wanted to be a photographer. At this time, as a keen amateur, I was a winner in the BBC's 'Young Photographer of the Year', and one of the judges



gave me some advice; use your talent. Don't let the world pass you by. He advised studying on the world renowned Documentary Photography course at Newport College of Art and Design. It was a renowned course, with 16 places and hundreds of applicants each year. Impossible, surely? Well, I applied, was accepted, and a few years later graduated and headed for London with my portfolio. A sliding doors moment indeed. A new chapter began, and I never looked back...

As a young photographer I honed my craft on the newly launched 'independent', and after a few years joined 'The Observer'. I also joined one of the world's most prestigious photographic agencies in Paris (oh how I wished I'd paid attention in French lessons!). Over the years my work was published in many of the worlds leading magazines, I have shot stories across all of the continents (with the exception of Antarctica). I have exhibited in galleries, been published in countless books, and lectured to thousands of aspiring photographers. I have captured moments of danger, grief, tragedy, but also joy and excitement. Funny moments too; in 1992, whilst photographing the Prime Minister at Downing Street, my mobile phone rang. After a few rings Mr Major barked "get the phone then Richard". Well, I couldn't say no! It was my mum, and after stuttering a few words the prime minister graciously took over and had a few convivial words with a middle aged lady in Selly Oak. What on earth just happened!



**Downing Street in 1997 photographing the arrival of the new
Prime Minister Tony Blair**

**Richard
Smith
continued...**

How could I have known that within ten years of leaving school I would be a friend and colleague to many of those great photographers that I had idolised as a schoolboy? Doing the job I had dreamed of, my photographs published alongside theirs.

My career required determination and resilience. I have no doubt that my time at Camp Hill gave me those qualities and more. I was able to use my education, particularly in history and politics, to inform and guide my work in the media.

We always leave it too late to say our 'thank you's'. But, I remain forever indebted to the perseverance and wise counsel of Headmaster Alan Cholomondely, who kept me on the straight and narrow. Similarly, to the wonderful Alistair Bulloch, for bringing history alive, my belated thanks. Who could forget our history 'singalong' – "maybe its because I'm a landowner", sung to the tune of "maybe it's because I'm a Londoner" by Flanagan and Allen! What joy. To George Cookson thanks for the rugby, and the tours, and don't mention the clay pigeon shooting...

To old friends, classmates I say 'hi' and best wishes! I hope life has treated you fairly. To my old prog rock classmates (Mark Billingham!) who hogged the record player in the 6th form common room – you were so wrong. The Clash were so much better than Genesis. Punk was the thing.

What would that apprehensive little boy on the number 11 bus have made of that?!



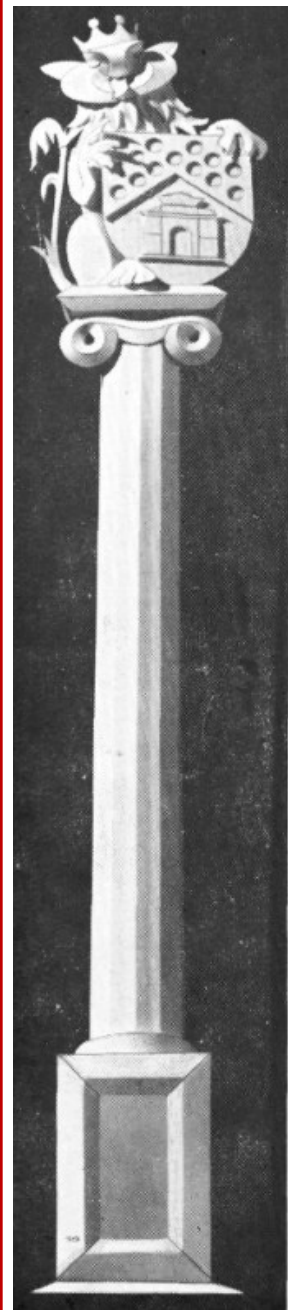
Black and white portrait of the late Hollywood actor William Hurt

Richard F Smith (Rufus) (1979)



Colour 'landscape' is a double page spread the Sunday Times magazine showing the housing crisis in Ireland in 2010

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Camp Hill Boys Through the Ages



KING EDWARD'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS.  CAMP HILL, BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER, 1921

Memories from the 1950's...



Mrs. Rogers presents the prizes at the Athletic Sports

Photograph : Hedge VIU



B. J. Wightman comes up to the Welsh scrum-half at Cardiff Arms Park.
England v. Wales, January, 1959

Photograph : Western Mail, Cardiff



Railway Society



Biology Field Trip



Memories from the 1960's...



The Lord Mayor talks with a group of boys in the library.

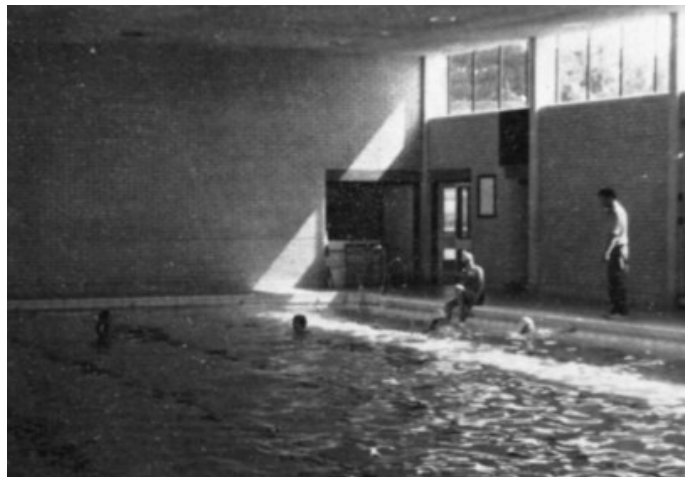


An informal photograph of the Xi, 1961.



A scene from the Staff play "The Ghost of Jerry Bundler."

Memories from the 1970's...



The Swimming Pool was opened on Tuesday 19th September, 1972 by the Bailiff, MR. R. J. GARRATT, D.F.C., and dedicated by the Bishop of Aston, the RT. REV. M. GREEN.



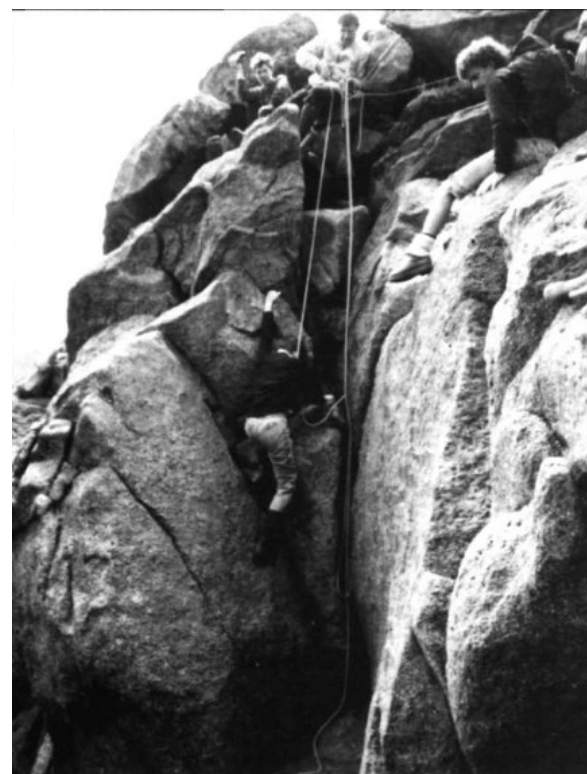
Colours
Lankester, Aspey, Gaspar, Khwaja,
Foote, Hazlewood, Elliman, Gough, Renton



Memories from the 1980's...



Best foot forward!



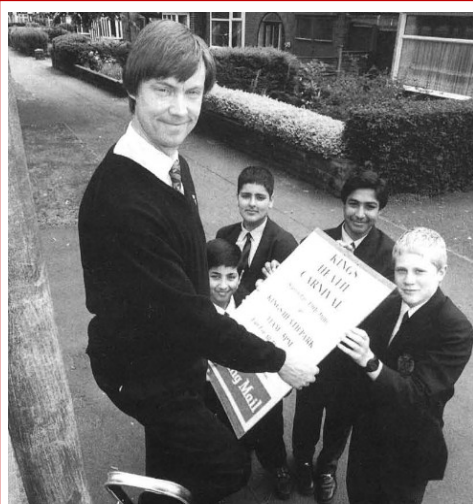
Isle of Arran Summer Camp: Porter's Leap on Achir

Memories from the 1990's...

A Chris Evans look-alike helps a group of Year 10s to open their mini-enterprise, selling stationery.



Jubilant: Five Birmingham boys celebrate their A-level success.



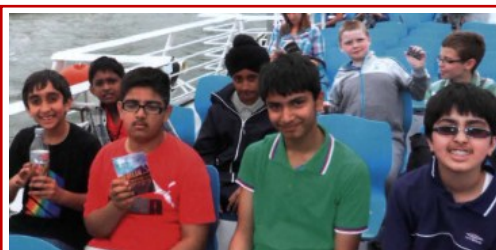
Warwickshire Under 12 Chess Championship, and made the papers!



Memories from the noughties...



Memories from the twenty-tens...



Memories from the twenty-twenties...



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