

Eagle News



Issue 124 July 2023 - July 2024
The Magazine of the Old Bedford Modernians' Club

*Taking positive
steps to address
the challenge
of RAAC*

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The Magazine of the Old Bedford Modernians' Club

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July 2023 - July 2024

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Staff rally to get the school ready for students to return following urgent government guidance at the end of August 2023 to close all areas containing reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).
See feature on page 4.



Please note that this is a slightly extended issue of *Eagle News* as we aim for the issue dates to coincide with the academic year in future.

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Letter *from the* Headmaster

David Payne

It is with great pleasure that I write my inaugural letter for *Eagle News* as Bedford Modern School's Headmaster. I took up post in January 2024 but even on my visits prior to that date I was made to feel very welcome by the whole BMS community and am continually struck by its warmth. When applying for the role I was attracted by the school's values, which very much resonate with my own and I am proud to say that all three of my children have settled in well to school life here.

The academic year 2023-24 has been an unusual one and did not begin as anyone would have hoped. The Government issued guidance at the end of August 2023 for all schools with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the fabric of their buildings to close affected areas immediately for safety reasons and as a result we had to close the Sports Complex, a large section of the Junior School and much of the main school building. You will read more about this in the pages that follow but I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr Whomsley, Mr Horn and the wider leadership team for all their considerable efforts during the first term in managing this unprecedented situation. Students and staff alike adapted remarkably quickly to the enforced reconfiguration of the buildings and, with true BMS spirit, made the very best of a difficult situation showing resilience throughout.

In many ways my experience at BMS thus far has been even more of a voyage of discovery than it might otherwise have been as we have been obliged to think creatively. Using different venues across Bedford while

the Howard Hall and other key areas of the main school building have remained out of action has offered an alternative experience for our students which, I am sure, will form part of their memories of school life for years to come. For our youngest students of course, this year has been quite the adventure and they have certainly made the most of life in their temporary new home in Biddenham. I am extremely pleased that their education continued uninterrupted.

The co-curricular programme at BMS is one of this school's greatest strengths, and during the past few months I have had the pleasure of attending *Urinetown*, *The Little Mermaid* and *Jungle Book*, been astounded by the talent of our musicians in the multitude of formal and informal concerts including the fantastic Open Mic Night and have greatly enjoyed the variety of House events and activities, especially House Debating and House Water Sports.

We have celebrated individual and team success across all sports this year and 85% of students, that's a total of 1,088 from Years 3 to 13, have represented the school in 235 teams playing 920 fixtures in 22 sports. A quite staggering achievement and a real demonstration of inclusive sports provision. In addition to these key co-curricular areas there are all manner of other clubs and societies on offer from CCF to Lego, and chess to coding. There really is something for everyone and it is this breadth of opportunity which makes BMS the very special place that it is.

I have also been struck by the contribution our students make to the wider community. I attended a special event run by the Tibbs Dementia Foundation at which some of our most talented sixth form musicians performed. 'Music 4 Memory' helps those affected by dementia and their carers to come together in music and highlights the transformative and healing power it can have on their everyday lives. It was tremendous to witness the willingness of our students to want to support such an important initiative.

It would be remiss of me not to mention last summer's A Level and GCSE results which, despite the grading system being adjusted to pre-pandemic levels nationally, were impressive indeed. A Levels were the first public examinations that the cohort of Year 13 students had taken, as their GCSE grades were based on assessments made by teachers. However, their commitment and determination was rewarded with 82% of grades awarded at A*- B, a 3% increase on the results achieved four years previously, 52% of grades marked at A*- A, and more than a third of all students achieving three A grades or better. Similarly at GCSE the results showed an increase in the top grades awarded compared to 2019 with an impressive 21% marked at grade 9 and more than two thirds at 9-7. My congratulations to students and staff alike.

In January, when I took up post, I wrote of my excitement about both the challenges and opportunities of the role, and I haven't been disappointed on any front. It is my firm belief that lesser schools would have crumbled in the face of such adversity, and with the imminent imposition of VAT on school fees there will undoubtedly still be challenges ahead. However, this is an exceptional school and despite these challenges, I am confident that the school will continue to thrive. It is an honour to serve as its Headmaster.

I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months and years to come and hearing about your special memories of BMS past and present. The OBM events that I have had attended thus far have been most enjoyable and your warm welcome has been greatly appreciated.

With my best wishes

David Payne
Headmaster

Removing RAAC - *a challenge like no other*

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight concrete, which was commonly used in the construction of schools, colleges and hospitals between the 1950s and mid-1990s. Areas within BMS contain it. On Thursday 31 August, the government issued a directive for educational institutions with RAAC present to close all affected areas. At BMS this included parts of the Junior School, the Sports Complex and Blue Floor Gym but mainly the Senior School.

Within just in a few days, we had:

- Re-instated marquees as we did during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Subdivided common rooms and larger areas to create teaching spaces.
- Repurposed other spaces around the campus to provide additional classrooms.
- Installed large digital screens in all new areas for teaching purposes.

All students returned to the school site on Friday 08 September, just a couple of days later than planned.

Following that and by the end of October 2023 a great deal was achieved to establish more robust teaching areas and office space:

- The DT workshop and some of the classrooms on the lower corridor were reinstated thanks to scaffolding and planks acting as a crash ceiling.
- Two of the senior school common rooms and the library were subdivided with stud walls and fire doors to provide 11 discrete teaching spaces.
- An agreement was established for the Junior School to relocate to a vacant school site in Biddenham for the remainder of the academic year, to allow contractors to have a base on the Junior School playground.
- Meanwhile spaces continued to be repurposed to ensure that co-curricular activities could continue, for example the orchestra began rehearsing in the Science Centre atrium.



On-site and off-site solutions

We were determined that the broad range of co-curricular activities and key school events would continue, and we used venues off site to facilitate this. For example, we held our Senior Production of *Urinetown* at Sharnbrook Theatre, music concerts at King's House in Bedford and our key mock examinations at Bedford Heights on Manton Lane. The GCSE and A Level Art exhibitions used space at the Junior School site in Biddenham. One innovative solution included the introduction of the popular 'Tuck Truck' to help with Year 7 and 8 tuck but also as an additional catering option for Saturday sport fixtures.



One school, back together

Relocating the Junior School to Biddenham in late October provided continuity for our youngest students and much needed classroom space on the main site to enable works to take place safely and negate the need for teaching to take place in marquees. By the end of December, full lunch service resumed in the Refectory.

The work on replacing the affected parts of the Junior School roof was completed by the end of the summer term 2024 ready for staff and students to return in September. We also took the opportunity to upgrade the lighting, increase insulation and make internal improvements where needed including raising the internal wall in the computer suite and installing air conditioning to that area.



Sports Complex

It was imperative that work on the Sports Complex was completed in time for the beginning of the public examinations in May 2024. As with the Junior School, improvements were made to increase efficiency and usability. Notably we installed upgraded lighting to the main hall which included both exam and sport-compliant settings. When the examinations concluded work began to refloor the main hall and install new cricket nets.



Current works in progress

Much of the outside of the main school remains shrouded in scaffolding. The works on the classrooms under the library are now complete releasing yet more usable space and we have now begun the next phases of construction which includes removing RAAC, and in some cases asbestos, from Music, Drama and the Howard Hall, DT, Art and English. This is a very ambitious programme and by the time it is complete we will have removed some 600 tonnes of RAAC.

Because of the scale of the task, we took the decision not to run our Holiday Activity Courses during the summer to allow construction vehicles on site. The programme of work has been managed in this way to minimise the level of disruption during term time as far as has been possible.



Future development

We continue to look at plans to develop the site and architects have confirmed that the T Block, which currently contains Maths and the old Science rooms, is the optimum space for redevelopment. It's currently an inefficient use of space and we are assessing its suitability and future fit as some of the classrooms are not appropriate for modern teaching methods and the school's emerging needs. We are also investigating the possibility of enhancing the changing facilities in the Sports Complex to achieve a better gender balance. Similarly, School House is not an energy efficient building so redevelopment of that area is also a possibility, but all current considerations very much remain non-costed aspirations at this point.

OBM Events Gallery (July 2023 - July 2024)

Christmas Lunch

The OBM Christmas Lunch was held on Saturday 16 December 2023 and it was a delight to welcome more than 100 former students and staff members to the Refectory for the occasion. Guests enjoyed a warm and festive welcome, courtesy of our talented BMS musicians, before taking to their seats for a traditional Christmas meal. It was fantastic to be joined by OBMs from every decade since the 1940s, including some of our most recent 2023 leavers. A wonderful start to the festive season for everyone who attended.



London Lunch

The London Lunch sells out year on year, and 2024 was no exception, with tickets selling out in under an hour! More than 160 OBMs travelled to Westminster on Friday 01 March to enjoy a three-course meal and drinks in

the Members' Dining Room at the House of Commons. This was the first OBM event for new Headmaster, David Payne, who was met with a warm welcome from all attendees, and both Mr Payne and OBM Club President, Tony Wildman (1960-67) addressed the room with fantastic speeches.

As always, we would like to thank Richard Fuller (1971-81) MP for sponsoring the event and also James Stonor (1990-95) and Paul Nash (1973-80) whose groups kindly sponsored tickets, meaning that several OBMs in full-time education were given the opportunity to attend.



To see more please visit the photo section of the OBM website at obmclub.bedmod.co.uk

OBM Sports Weekend

Our very first OBM Sports Weekend was held on Friday 22 and Saturday 23 March, bringing together many individual sports into one event. The weekend kicked off with 60 OBMs taking part in the football on the Friday evening, followed by refreshments in the King Room. Assistant Head, Neale Else, was presented with an OBM-signed football shirt as a thank you for his support over the years, as he is retiring at the end of the academic year.

The Saturday schedule was jam-packed with a variety of sports: hockey, netball, touch rugby, fives, and the much-anticipated Bruce Willey Memorial Match, in which our current Year 12 and 13 students took on our recent leavers in contact rugby. Once again, refreshments were provided in the King Room and it was fantastic to see so many OBMs enjoying some hot food and a couple of drinks with old friends.



Rowing and Race Day Dinner

On Saturday 27 April we hosted our annual OBM rowing event and race day dinner, with a fantastic turn out. We'd like to thank Mike Biggs (1991-2001), who is now stepping down from leading OBM rowing, which he has done for the past 19 years. We are grateful for his dedication to, and obvious passion for, BMS rowing.



OBM Events Gallery (July 2023 - July 2024)

The Steve Monico OBM Memorial Water Polo Tournament

The Steve Monico OBM Memorial Water Polo Tournament was held on Saturday 18 May and was a resounding success. It was fantastic to have OBMs spanning six decades taking part, with many more spectating. The afternoon featured a round-robin competition with four mixed teams, resulting in exciting and competitive games. Special thanks to Mark Bullerwell (1982-90) for organising the OBM players and officiating alongside Tom Perry (1978-88).



Founder's Dinner

On Friday 21 June, more than 100 OBMs returned to the school for the annual Founder's Dinner, many of whom attended as part of a large reunion group. It was fantastic to see so many former students and staff reminiscing together and they were joined by two long-serving teachers who are retiring this year; Neale Else and Trevor Rex.



To see more please visit the photo section of the OBM website at obmclub.bedmod.co.uk

Henley Royal Regatta

OBM's and current and former parents stopped by the BMS gazebo at Henley Royal Regatta on Tuesday 02 July 2024 to enjoy a glass of Pimms and canapés. The atmosphere was fantastic and our senior crews were also in attendance, enjoying everything that this prestigious event has to offer.



T20 Cricket

The OBM Cricket event took place on Friday 12 July 2024 and it was a fantastic end to

the academic year. We were delighted to welcome two OBM teams and numerous spectators, alongside two student teams, one of which included girls for the first time. Year 12 student Charlie's outstanding

performance on the pitch earned him the prestigious Millman Cup and the winning team of OBM's were awarded the coveted Chinneck Cup.



Dates for your Diary

Thursday 12 September 2024

September Social: Terrace on the Thames

Saturday 14 December 2024

OBM Club Christmas Lunch

Friday 07 March 2025 OBM Club London Lunch

Spring 2025 (date tbc) OBM Sports Weekend

Friday 20 June 2025 The Founder's Dinner

Please be aware that these dates are provisional and may be subject to change

News

Award success for Warren D'Souza

In August 2023, Warren D'Souza (2010-17) was announced as the winner of the 17th 3D Reid Student prize, the largest independent prize for architecture master's students. All schools of architecture in the UK are invited to nominate their best student for the award and the University of Bath nominated Warren for 'Threads of Time'. From the nominations, the judges shortlisted five finalists and ultimately the panel agreed that Warren's cultural project promoting traditional textile craft in the city of Udaipur was the most comprehensive, rational and resolved response with a superb depth of drawings, line work and material consideration to ensure locally sourced materials were used throughout.

Warren had also received a nomination for The President's Medal 2023, which was established in 1836 and is awarded to the best graduate globally by The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). They are RIBA's oldest awards and are regarded as one of the most prestigious prizes in architectural education globally. Schools of architecture located across the globe are invited to nominate the work of their best students and, from the nominees, the medal is awarded by the RIBA President to the best project in the world. The University of Bath nominated Warren and he made it to the shortlist, an amazing accomplishment.



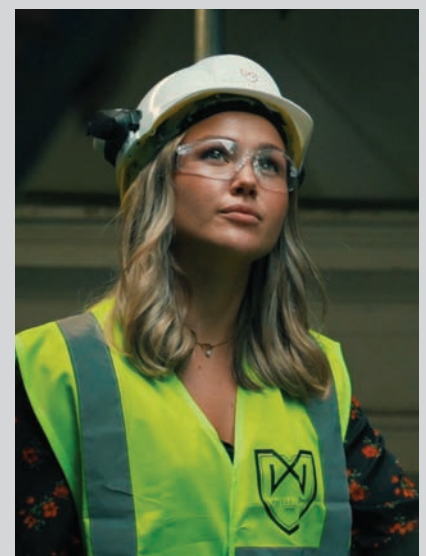
'Rising Star' Hannah recognised at the CN Awards 2023

On the evening of 13 July 2023, Hannah Tyers (2013-18) attended the prestigious Construction News Awards having been nominated for the Rising Star category due to her impressive career achievements in her role as Assistant Surveyor at Walter Lilly, and her ambition to help others. The awards showcase and celebrate the very best talent in the construction industry and

this year's ceremony, hosted by Claudia Winkleman, was held in the glitzy ballroom of the Grosvenor House Hotel in Mayfair.

Hannah received a 'high commendation' for her exceptional work to address alcoholism in the construction industry. This is a fantastic achievement and highlights the hard work and dedication that Hannah has demonstrated. Addressing alcoholism is a cause that is close to Hannah's heart following the devastating loss of her mother in December 2021 and she has used her free time to volunteer for NACOA, a charity dedicated to supporting those affected by a parent's drinking. Hannah understood the importance of getting the message into workplaces - including construction sites, so that people know where to turn when they or someone they love is struggling.

On Friday 14 June 2024, we were delighted to welcome Hannah back as our guest of honour at the Academic Awards ceremony, which was held at King's House.



James Bracey's Big 'Oardeal'

On 13 December James Bracey (1991-93), far right in the picture, set off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to take part in the World's Toughest Row, a 3,000 mile row across the Atlantic that would see him rowing for 41 days, finishing in Antigua on 22 January. His team, The Big Oardeal, were all ex-military and three of them were at Sandhurst together 20 years ago. They raised more than £100,000 for their chosen charities.

James told us about his experience: "We knew this would be a massive challenge and were well prepared but probably underestimated the enormity of the task. It was physically demanding but probably as much of a mental challenge.

"Getting into a routine was critical from the outset. We rowed 2-hours on and 2-hours off. With the exception of a 3-hour shift at night, we continued with this routine for 41 days. We were self-sufficient on the boat and carried all food for the trip plus had a desalination plant on board for our drinking water.

"38 boats started and we finished 12th after navigating some tricky weather conditions. We experienced the force of the Atlantic very early on with 30ft + waves. We were

fortunate that we didn't capsize but that may have been more luck than skill.

We set three objectives: to be better friends at the end, to arrive safely and to raise over £100,000 for our chosen charities. We are delighted to say that we achieved all three!

"None of us were previous rowers. We all played rugby together in the army but this challenge gave us so much in terms of resolve, team work, shared goals etc. We set out shared values from the beginning and agreed the following: Never Give Up, Kindness, Honesty and Reliability."



Simon Otter awarded British Empire Medal

In November 2023 Simon Otter (1982-92) was awarded a British Empire Medal for services to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic, at an investiture at The Tower of London by the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa, who was representing HM The King.

During the height of the pandemic, Simon mobilised and ran a team of volunteers who prepared and delivered more than 1,000 free meals per day, and was instrumental in preparing and delivering

more than 22,000 free meals to hospitals across South West London and Surrey.

In May 2020 he formed a partnership with three M&S stores to ensure their surplus food made its way to key workers and the vulnerable, along with the 25,000 muffins that were baked by volunteers under his guidance.

Simon said: "I feel extremely humbled by the award which was principally in recognition of my volunteering during the



pandemic. I do very much view this as a collective award which recognises the achievement of everyone involved."

Two OBMs honoured in King's Birthday Honours list

We were delighted to hear of two OBMs who were honoured in the King's Birthday Honours list in June 2024.

Sir Richard Greenhalgh (1958-63) was knighted for his services to education. He was the founding chair of the National College for School Leadership, establishing it nationally and internationally as a renowned centre for educational leadership development. Whilst chair of Hope and Homes for Children, his strong governance ensured that humanitarian aid was provided to 19,000 families in Ukraine and more than 20,000 refugees in Romania and Moldova. He chaired British Youth Opera and established, with his wife Annie, a music scholarship at Cambridge University. Under his chairmanship, United Learning's scale transformed from 43 academies to 80 by September 2023 with

approximately 10,000 employees and educating around 65,000 pupils. Across all its academies inspected in the group, 89% are 'good' or better, compared to 39% at their previous inspection. During the pandemic, he helped manage the EdTech Demonstrator programme and develop Teaching School Hubs. He strengthened governance links and forged stronger relationships enabling a much stronger voice within the sector.

Politician Richard Fuller CBE (1971-81) became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in recognition of his political and public service. Richard was the Conservative candidate for the newly formed North Bedfordshire constituency in the general election, and has previously served as MP in Bedford and Kempston, and North East Bedfordshire.



Ben Mullan is 'One to Watch'

Ben Mullan (2018-23) was honoured to win the 'Ones to Watch' category at the Into Film Awards, which took place on 25 June at the Leicester Square Odeon in London. The 'Ones to Watch' award recognises inspirational young people who are on the cusp of making the leap into screen industry careers. Many celebrities attended to support the young filmmakers and Ben was presented with his award by Jayden Revri and Zawe Ashton.

Ben learnt how to animate on a one-day course, aged 9, and began making his own films at age 11. To gain feedback on his animations and to reach a wider audience, he entered the Film of the Month competition organised by Into Film. He is currently the only young person to have won Film of the Month four times. He has also won Young Animator of the Year UK (Stop Motion 15-18 category) three years in a row, which encouraged him to pursue a career as a stop motion animator.

After finishing his A levels in 2023, Ben started training online with the Aardman Academy, finishing their Stop Motion 1 and 2 industry standard courses by April 2024. He has invested his Into Film Awards prize money into a five week Stop Motion Professional course at Aardman Animations' Gas Ferry Road studios in Bristol,

which starts in August. This will enable him to produce a professional level showreel which he will use to apply for animator jobs in September 2024. Ben commented: "I would love to work for Aardman Animations as a stop motion animator as I hugely admire the creativity of their work, and their dedication to excellence."



Daisy secures Donnelly Design Award

The recipient of the 2024 Donnelly Design Award, which is awarded to a Year 13 student for outstanding work in Design and Technology, is Daisy Noble-Layng. The award was established by generous donor Bill Donnelly, his brother Ted, and cousins William and Ellen in memory of OBMs Thomas Donnelly (1932-37) and William Donnelly (1929-35).

Daisy's project brief was to redesign a cat litter tray so that they are easier to clean and more eco-friendly. After many design ideas and prototypes, the final design featured a conveyor belt system that reduces the amount of contact needed and biodegradable cardboard boxes to remove the need for single use plastic bags.

On Tuesday 09 July 2024 we welcomed Bill and Margeret Donnelly to BMS who, along with Andy Jones, Head of Design Technology, enjoyed lunch with Daisy and last year's winner, Imogen Sanctuary (2012-23). Daisy shared her ideas behind the project and Imogen updated them on how her studies are going at Loughborough University.



Bhavesh Shah installed as new High Sheriff of Bedfordshire

Bhavesh Shah (1993-2000) has been installed as the new High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, succeeding former OBM Club President Russell Beard (1971-80). The ceremony took place at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Luton on Saturday 23 March 2024.

The office of High Sheriff is officially the King's representative for Law and Order in the county and lasts for a period of one year. Dating back to Saxon times, the sheriff (or shire reeve) used to collect the rents and taxes in addition to administering crime prevention, hence the carrying of a sword. Nowadays the role is primarily to shine a light on local charitable and voluntary groups.

Russell commented: "I have been enormously proud to serve the county of my birth and have had some amazing experiences - especially meeting so many incredible unsung volunteers across the county. Bhavesh will have a fantastic year in office, he is a really well-connected person and of course went to the right school!"

Bhavesh added: "It is an incredible honour to be installed as High Sheriff and I hope that I can offer help to the numerous charities in Bedfordshire through the influence of the office."



Students and OBMs hit the right note at prestigious music colleges

Talented jazz pianist and Year 13 student Charlie Blades is heading to the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama in September to study for a Bachelor of Music (BMus) degree specialising in jazz piano.

For a number of years Charlie has featured regularly in BMS performances, concerts and smaller charity events and has been selected to take part in the National Youth Jazz Collective's Summer School on several occasions. Most recently, at BMS, he was part of the band providing the music for the senior production of *Urinetown* and this, together with his involvement in previous shows such as *Our House* and *Made in Dagenham*, has further developed his musical ability. He was also the 2021 recipient of the David Ball Scholarship, a legacy established in memory of a former student to support our most promising pianists, which provided a contribution towards the cost of Charlie's music lessons.

Mrs Perry, Director of Music at BMS said: "Charlie richly deserves his place at Guildhall. He has been a reliable member of our jazz ensembles that play in the local community, often supporting charity events, and has always asked for more opportunities to perform. What's more, driven by his desire to play with the school orchestra as a soloist, Charlie has transcribed and arranged *Wave* by Antonio Carlos Jobim for members of the BMS orchestra to perform at the school's Spring Concert. Charlie can often be found in the Music Faculty by a piano and his willingness to take on different challenges through his time with us has broadened his musical experience and widened his repertoire."

All musicians face rigorous auditions ahead of their offers to study for a degree in Music. As part of Charlie's application process, he was asked to provide a 24-part orchestral arrangement of a jazz standard, and a transcription of a jazz musician's solo notated entirely by ear. He explained more about his passion for jazz saying: "Jazz

music is like a conversation. There's no sheet music, you just improvise and that's exciting. I enjoy the unpredictability of it!"

Charlie is not the only one heading off to prestigious music colleges in September. Former BMS students Freddy Hoare (2018-23), who plays flute and piano, will study for a Bachelor of Music (BMus) degree at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) in Cardiff while Seren Kapur (2019-23), a cellist, has chosen a BMus (Hons) with Performance at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London.

They all spoke warmly of the support and inspiration they received from their teachers at BMS. Freddy said: "Mrs Perry communicates her passion for music in and out of lessons and she encourages everyone to join musical ensembles, which I believe is one of the main reasons the department is as alive and as respected as it is, especially the jazz provision which is taught by world-class musicians.

"All students at BMS are provided with the opportunity to take part in ensembles, no matter the level, and the music faculty are not afraid to push the boundaries in regard to the variety of music being learned."

Charlie added: "Mrs Perry has been a massively helpful influence on my development as a musician and the many and varied opportunities provided by the music department have been instrumental – pun intended – on my development.

"Finally, the excellent tuition of Nikki Iles – one of the best jazz pianists in the country, as well as Harry Baker, one of Nikki's former students, has made a massive impact on my progress."

Charlie was also awarded the 2024 'Old Bedford Modernians' Lodge Award for Personal Achievement', for playing a pivotal role in the musical life of the School.



Mario secures place at prestigious Paris business school

Year 13 student Mario Brandon has been offered a place to study in Paris at one Europe's leading business schools. Mario, who is studying Business, Psychology and Geography at A-Level, will head to the French capital in September to study at ESCP Business School.

ESCP were so impressed with Mario, they awarded him a 50 per cent scholarship to help fund his place to study Business Management (BSc). ESCP was fourth in the 2023 Financial Times European Business Schools ranking, solidifying its prestigious status among Europe's elite.

The school has five campuses across the continent and the course will offer Mario a chance to live and study in some stunning European cities. He will study for his first year of three at ESCP in Paris before heading to Turin in year two, where his early A-Level in Italian is sure to come in useful.

Speaking of his achievement, Mario said: "I'm very happy. It's one of the best business schools in Europe. I'm excited to study in Paris and Turin and in the third year, we get a choice of the five campuses, and I think I'll choose Berlin. It's a chance to learn and experience different cultures and languages. I can't wait."



Richard Smith, Head of Business at BMS, said: "This is an amazing achievement by Mario to gain entry onto this highly competitive course. You are competing on an international stage against students drawn from a worldwide applicant pool."

"It is a truly international student body consisting of more than 75 nationalities with the chance to study in Paris, Turin, Madrid, Berlin or London. Courses are taught in English with some units in Spanish or French and a compulsory internship to gain real world work experience."

Mario hopes to get a year or two of work experience under his belt after completing his course, before returning to education to study for a Master's degree.

Tom awarded Honorary Fellowship of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

On 14 June 2024, Tom Chapman (1998-2003) was awarded Honorary Fellowship of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC). Honorary Fellowships are awarded in recognition of the achievement of distinction in the music or acting profession to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the work and life of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Tom's citation, presented by Joe Broughton, drew attention to his contribution to the world of percussion as

a leading cajón player and authority on the instrument since the early 2000s, as well as his work teaching at conservatoires and universities. Also highlighted were Tom's twenty years of voluntary support for percussionists at RBC, via their Folk Ensemble, and his work building audiences at the Conservatoire and beyond through his expertise as an arts-focused marketer.



News

Success in the 2023 Cyber Challenge

On Thursday 06 July 2023, BMS students in Years 5-9 took part in the 2023 Cyber Challenge, organised by the British Computer Society Bedford Branch. To enter, students were required to use programming languages to create games and educational resources on various different aspects of online safety, which they presented to a judging panel at Cranfield University. They performed extremely well, bringing home eight trophies and placing first in the Year 5, 7 and 8 categories.



Year 9 dancer Alyssia performs in New York Gala

Talented Year 9 dancer Alyssia qualified for one of the world's largest student dance competitions, the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) and was invited to perform in front of 2,000 people at the 25th Anniversary Gala at the Lincoln Center in New York City on Thursday 18 April 2024.

In the competition, Alyssia came in the top 12 for contemporary ballet and together with this significant achievement, she was awarded a bursary to cover the cost of rehearsals for the gala where she performed on stage with the international contemporary ensemble.

A valued member of the BMS dance community and a member of the Power Academy of Dance, she came fifth in the finals of the Ballet Grand Prix in Dundee, Scotland in February 2024, competing against students from around the world. Her display there earned her a place on a summer intensive ballet course in Italy for which she was awarded a bursary to cover half of her costs.

Alyssia is also a mid-associate for the Royal Ballet School, a prestigious opportunity for the most talented young dancers to study additional classes on Saturdays designed to augment an individual's current training programme.



Most recently, Alyssia performed a solo in the Birmingham Royal Ballet's (BRB) *Sleeping Beauty Dreams* production. BRB is one of the world's great touring ballet companies and an authority in both classic ballet and contemporary dance.

Rachael Bradley-Smith, Head of Dance at BMS, said: "It is very rare to teach such an intuitive and talented dancer. Alyssia will, I have no doubt, have an incredibly successful dancing career. Her talents cross all dance genres, and she is also gifted at both singing and piano. She is a pleasure to teach and a credit to all her dance teachers and BMS alike. I watched Alyssia perform a solo as part of the Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty Dreams* performance and it was spectacular."

Harvey makes directorial debut

Talented Year 11 student Harvey won the Young Film Academy (YFA) Best 1-Week Film award with his directorial debut 'Boo', created during his time on the 2023 YFA Summer Camp. This was a great opportunity for Harvey, who has already been acting for many years, to get experience working behind the camera with other creative young people.



Carolyn impresses in creative art competition

Talented Year 8 artist Carolyn achieved third place in the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) 'YouCreate: Chaos' competition. Her impressive piece 'Everything Has Its Place' included a variety of different media and ideas from her imagination and was on display during a special exhibition in July 2024.



Jonny Matthews named future leader in partnership marketing

In September 2023, affiliate marketing organisation Hello Partner published 30 Under 30 future leaders in partnership marketing, and OBM Jonny Matthews (2003-12) made the list.

Jonny is the founder of gocertify, a RetailTech that helps brands take ownership of their offer experience. They do this through AI-led shopper verification tools for targeting closed user groups and white-label offers pages. They have signed up 300+ retailers in 50+ countries in less than three years. This amazing achievement, coupled with his entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrates why Jonny has been recognised as a future leader.



BMS Lego League team win Best Robot Design

The BMS Lego League team shone at the regional First Lego League Challenge on Thursday 14 March 2024 at Cranfield University. Having designed a Lego robot around a single brick containing a Bluetooth receiver and electronics, our students earned their best-ever score of 280 at the event. They built the robot with speed and durability in mind to ensure it could carry out various tasks, such as carrying a Lego man and switching a button, without losing time or needing to be repaired. Their efforts were justly rewarded as they also took home an award for Best Robot Design. The competition is part of the worldwide First Lego League initiative designed to engage students in STEM subjects. To top the day off, the team even spotted a handful of Formula One cars at the university.



Ernest becomes regional winner of the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators

Year 10 student Ernest is the East of England regional winner of the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, having been awarded the Level 4 certificate for Mandarin. The prize is organised each academic year by Queen's College at Oxford University and is a national competition open to all secondary schools in the UK. Students are tasked with translating a passage from Spanish, French, German, Italian or Mandarin into English.



Tom Robinson joins cast of *Les Misérables*

In September 2023, Tom Robinson (2005-15), who uses the stage name Tom Hext, began his role in the West End production of *Les Misérables*, appearing as *Grantaire* and 1st cover *Thenardier*. Tom played an integral part in BMS Performance Arts during his time at the school, taking lead roles in *Beauty and the Beast*, *Miss Saigon*, *Guys and Dolls* and playing Jean Valjean in our own production of *Les Misérables* in 2014.

Tom joined two of his BMS co-stars in the West End - Fergus Dale (2004-15) who is appearing in *Wicked* and Simon Whitaker (2006-15) in *The Phantom of The Opera*.



Akshay awarded Hill Family Scholarship

Akshay Gohil, Year 13, spent two weeks volunteering in India, a trip that was funded by the 2023 Hill Family Scholarship. Generously donated by OBM Dr Adam Hill (1993-98) and his family, the scholarship offers a BMS student (or students) who are intending to study medicine £1,000 to travel to a disadvantaged area and improve the health of the children in the community there.

During July 2023, Akshay visited Babylon Children's Hospital and Aashray Orphanage in Jaipur, India. He spent time with the children living there and learnt about the different challenges they face on a daily basis.



Once he returned, Akshay shared a bit more about his trip: "I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I learnt about the challenges of an underfunded healthcare system and the differences in conditions and their treatments compared to what I had seen in the UK. It was amazing to immerse myself in a completely new culture through volunteering and understand how to overcome the challenges that come with solo travel. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity - it was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience and will support my future ambitions to study medicine."

Chemistry students race to the top 20

A group of Year 13 Chemistry students finished in the top 20 of the Cambridge University Chemistry Race when competing against 90 other schools from across the country on Saturday 10 February 2024. The five Sixth Form students had to answer as many questions as possible in the allocated two hours but were only given new questions once they'd correctly answered the previous ones. The BMS team worked together, utilising not only their Chemistry knowledge, but also expertise in Biochemistry, Physics, and Maths to put in a very creditable performance.



Joel performs on Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage



In June 2024 musician Joel Waters (2006-10) took to the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury to perform alongside Olivia Dean. Joel has been touring the world with Olivia and various other artists, with his plans including American festivals and performing in Asia. This is a fantastic achievement, and such an experience to have performed on the world-famous Pyramid Stage.

Emily selected as finalist at Broadway Arts Festival

Year 13 student Emily was selected as one of 150 finalists in the 2023 Broadway Arts Festival Open Art Competition. Her work was showcased at an exclusive selling exhibition at Theatrebarn, an arts venue in Worcestershire, and a portion of the funds raised went towards local outreach projects and bursaries for university arts students.



Issy's essay shortlisted for prestigious competition

History student Issy Ogborne's essay entitled *How have empires throughout history shaped the societies we live in today?* was shortlisted in the annual Northeastern University London essay competition. It came in the top 12 per cent of entries out of a field of 4,500. Issy, who is currently in Year 12 and hopes to study History at university, attended a lecture on essay writing at Northeastern University following her recent success to help develop her skills even further.



Success in the Mathematics Trust Team Maths Challenge

On Tuesday 07 May, four students in Years 8 and 9 travelled to Milton Keynes to take part in the first UK Mathematics Trust team maths challenge since the Covid-19 pandemic. The BMS team competed against 19 schools from across the South

East, with some coming from London.

Tanishk, Maher, Gabriel and Sarina came a commendable fourth overall, thanks to scoring 100 per cent in the first two rounds of an exciting and fast-paced competition.



#GreatNightOut

In November 1623, Shakespeare's first folio was published. Within it were some of his most famous works including *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These plays are still performed today and exactly 400 years later, Theatre In Transit, BMS's Sixth Form theatre company, performed their own wonderful interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Place, Bedford. Full of humour, intensity and the most fabulous set, it really was entertainment at its very best.



Everyone involved in the senior production of *Urinetown* was 'flushed' with pride after a spectacular five-night run at the Sharnbrook Mill Theatre in March 2024! The show, a satirical comedy, was wickedly funny yet tackled some of the most pressing issues in contemporary society. Fantastically entertaining, it showcased the extraordinary talent of our young actors, musicians and those working backstage ... and what a set!



News

In June 2024, more than 100 students in Years 7-10 spent four nights 'under the sea' at the Junior School in Biddenham in their performance of *The Little Mermaid*. It was enchanting in every way from the spectacular set, music and costumes to the fabulous storytelling on stage. The young actors and dancers made us believe in mermaids, the power of love and the magic of theatre!



The Excavation of the 'Haunted' Effigies

Back in 1919, students from BMS were involved in the excavation of 'haunted' effigies at the Church of St Michael and All Angels in Millbrook village. John Stanbridge (1957-62), who volunteers in the School Archive, uncovered the history.

He writes: 'The Bedford Modern School Archaeological Society was inaugurated early in 1917. The Rev P G Langdon was appointed as President and there were 41 members. The Headmaster promised a prize for the best essay on this subject and the President a further prize for the best efforts by the Upper or Lower Fourths.



The Society proved to be very popular and its membership grew rapidly; 76 by December 1917, 90 by March 1918 and 135 by March 1919 (over 10 % of the School's pupils). From the outset they established their own research and lending library and later a magic lantern (slide projector) and slides collection. Every Wednesday a visiting speaker gave a lecture on various relevant subjects.

On 12 June 1917, the President, Rev P G Langdon commenced a series of field visits to local archaeological locations. There were few cars, so many of these involved quite lengthy bicycle rides. Most were within the county but day visits to other sites, for example Cambridge, were also achieved. A three-day cycle tour of Norfolk was also completed.

The Society's proudest moments came in Spring 1919 in the village of Millbrook which lies around seven miles south-west of Bedford. Its Grade 2 listed Church of St Michael and All Angels, is located on a hilltop on the edge of the village. This is where the story unfolds.



Firstly, some background is required. Sir William Huett, an influential local figure and his wife, Mary, lived in a large house (since demolished) near to the church. Mary died on 07 June 1602 and Sir William in around 1622. In keeping with their high status, a large altar tomb, topped by full-sized effigies of the couple, was erected in the church.

In 1857 the Church underwent restoration work which required the dismantling of the Huett Memorial. It was never reconstructed but the effigies were retained in the church. Sometime later, local villagers began to report strange noises and cracks in the church. Slowly there came a fear that the Huetts were unhappy with the ill-treatment of their monument and were making it known. Tales of this 'haunting' became widespread amongst the villagers to a state where many were afraid to attend services and other church functions. In a bid to overcome this problem, the Church Rector had the effigies moved to the cellar in his house. The noises and cracks continued unabated to a point where his servant refused to go down to the cellar to collect coal for the house fires. The Rector then decided to have the effigies buried in the church graveyard. The idea of 'haunting' was by now entrenched in the village and tales of noises continued.

In the Spring of 1919 Rev H P Pollard, Rector of Millbrook, decided to look for the buried effigies and asked the Rev P G Langdon to assist but no one knew where to dig. Seventeen students from the Archaeological Society set to work in the favoured part of the graveyard but after two days had found nothing. At this point Mrs Bunker, an elderly villager and the widow of a previous Sexton suggested digging in a different location where her long dead husband had struck hard stone at depth years before. Excavation here uncovered the effigies some two feet down.

Not surprisingly, in view of the many times the effigies had been moved, they were in a poor state with pieces missing. Sir William's head and legs were missing. Mary's effigy was in a much better condition although her head was no longer attached. It was believed the heads had been knocked off by Roundhead troops during the Civil War. The effigies and a panel from the tomb end were carefully moved back into the church to a location near to their original Altar Tomb. A wall tablet to the Huetts is nearby. Sir William's head has since been located.

The story of the 'hauntings' did not remain local. Articles telling the story of the tomb appeared in *The Bedfordshire Times*, *Country Life*, *The Daily Graphic*, *The Church Times*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Morning Post*, *The Star* and *Occult World*, and other local and national papers all contained accounts of the 'hauntings'. Many of these reports mention the crucial part played by the Bedford Modern School Archaeological Society. The Archaeological Society later merged with the BMS Natural History Society to form the Field Club which slowly faded away over time.'



Note: Some or all of the information is based on reports in the above newspapers and journals. That of the Bedfordshire Times 16 April 1919 is the most comprehensive



Sport

Hockey

In September 2023 a team of BMS students played in their regional round of the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) U11 Girls' Hockey Championships. After drawing their first two fixtures they scored an emphatic 4-0 win, followed by two narrow defeats. The girls went on to win their thrilling final game with a golden goal after the match tied in normal time, placing them fourth in their category.



Talent Academy call-up for Alfred

Alfred Warren, Year 11, has been selected for the England Hockey Talent Academy programme, which offers coaching and training to 1,000 of the most talented young players in England.

England Hockey Talent Academies were introduced in September 2022 to identify players aged 15-18 with extremely high playing potential. The programme aims to provide them with access to professional coaching and opportunities for individualised support. Talent Academies consider the player's whole hockey experience, taking into account the level and amount of hockey they play at school, club and county level, as well as at the academy itself.

To be selected, players must be nominated by coaches from their club, school or county squad. They may then be invited to an Open Assessment Day. If successful at this stage, they must prove their skills in two more rounds of observation and assessment before eventually securing a spot in a Talent Academy.

Alfred will be playing and training with the U18 squad in the Talent Academy hosted at Cambridge City Hockey Club (CCHC) alongside approximately 25 other boys. He will have weekly training, matches against teams from different regions, and online and in-person classroom sessions. He will also have the chance to attend Talent Academy festivals, comprising full day sessions at a variety of locations.

Alfred has played hockey since the age of four. He originally played for Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club before moving to CCHC, where he currently plays in the U16 Tier 1 and Men's 3rd XI squads. He has also played for the BMS 1st XI since he was in Year 9.

Mr Sloman, Head of Hockey at BMS, added: "Everyone at BMS is delighted for Alfred. His selection for the Cambridge Talent Academy is incredibly exciting and recognition of the hard work he has put in to improving as a hockey player. We are all looking forward to supporting Alfred as he continues his hockey development."



Equestrian

On 04 November 2023 four BMS students competed in the National Schools Equestrian Association show jumping event at Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire. Junior School students Charlotte and Suri claimed first and second place among some 30 competitors in their category, whilst Senior School students Eleanor and Sophie performed fantastically in the 80cm and 90cm classes. They all did a great job clearing a course of more than eight jumps.



Freya to represent BMS at National Championships

Year 12 student Freya will represent BMS at national championships after a stellar performance at the National Schools Showjumping Qualifiers. Freya, with her horse Joblesse van Het Napoleonhof, finished fifth in the 100cm class on Saturday 06 April 2024 thanks to a clear round and subsequently qualified for the Hickstead Plate. She shone during the 110cm class, however, finishing first and qualifying with another clear round in 45.12s. She will now take part in the National Schools Equestrian Association National Schools Championships at Addington in October.



Netball

Netball squads shine in county competitions

In the Autumn term 2023, the BMS U14, U15 and U16 netball squads excelled in the county rounds of the England Netball National Schools Competition. This is one of the biggest school tournaments in the netball calendar.

Our U14 and U15 squads both placed first in their competitions, held on 15 and 20 November respectively, crowning them county champions. Our U16 team narrowly missed out on the top spot at their tournament, held on 09 November, but comfortably secured second place. The BMS U19 team placed third in their category, representing the school excellently.

Miss Brightman, Head of Netball at BMS, said: "I have been very impressed with the dedication the girls have put into preparing for these tournaments outside of the netball term. The girls showed true grit, determination and pride for the school to get this fantastic set of results so early on in their season."

In March 2024, the Under-11 team continued the success by emerging victorious at the county netball tournament. BMS went unbeaten throughout, winning 10-0, 7-0 and 4-1 in the group stage. A 4-1 semi-final victory followed, before winning the tournament final 4-2.



Sport

Football

Pemi Aderoju signs with Peterborough United FC

Pemi Aderoju (2015-22) is living his dream as a professional footballer having made his debut for League One side Peterborough United. Pemi, who joined BMS in Year 7 and played for football teams throughout his time at the school, came on as a substitute during the final minutes of the league fixture between Peterborough United – also known as Posh – and Wycombe Wanderers on Saturday 10 February 2024 at Adams Park.

An imposing striker, Pemi signed for Peterborough following an impressive stint at non-league team Biggleswade United, where he caught the attention of Football League scouts by scoring 12 goals in as many games. After going on trial at Posh, he signed an 18-month deal to join the club in January. He then impressed for the Under-21s by scoring against the likes of Bristol City, Barnsley and twice against Tottenham Hotspur.

Pemi explained that the coaching from the BMS sports staff was crucial to his growth as a footballer and also spoke of his pride at making his debut for Posh. He said: "It was an amazing feeling playing in front of the fans in the stadium. It's something I've wanted to do for years and dreamt of. When I got the call to go on it was a feeling of excitement more than nerves. I just wanted to make an impact and the first touch was a header towards goal – that would have been crazy had it gone in, but the defender got a touch on it."

Peterborough United FC Academy Manager Dan Robinson added: "Pemi is a fantastic character, comes from a lovely family background, scored a lot of goals for Biggleswade and we are excited about his potential."

Pemi returned to BMS on Friday 08 March 2024 to present a signed shirt to BMS Head of Football Michael Park.



England call-up for Sophie

As well as securing a two-year contract with the Arsenal Women's Super League (WSL) Academy U21 Squad, Year 12 student Sophie Harrison was called up to represent the Young Lionesses in the Women's Under-17s European Championships. Sophie represented England during the tournament, in which they finished runners-up.



Jake Burger signs professional development contract at Luton Town FC

In September 2023, premieriership football team, Luton Town FC, announced the signing of Jake Burger (2014-21) on a professional development contract. Jake is a midfielder player who joined the club as an under-9 and he made the first team squad in the Carabou Cup match against Exeter.



Water polo

Year 13 athlete Eve Barnes was selected to represent Great Britain at the U17 Women's European Water Polo Championships in Turkey which took place in July 2023. In addition, she was selected as vice-captain of the team which is a fantastic achievement. A dedicated and talented player, Eve had previously received The Udal Trophy for Outstanding Sporting Achievement at our Academic Awards ceremony in recognition of all her hard work.



Year 12 student Ed has been selected for the GB U18 Water Polo squad following his performance throughout the year as part of a Swim England Water Polo Talent Centre. The newly-formed squad will train together with the aim of playing in the 2025 European Water Polo Championship.



Success for the U18 boys' water polo team

The Senior Under-18 boys' water polo team won the English Schools' Swimming Association (ESSA) Plate at Eton College in March 2024. They played exceptionally well and were undefeated throughout the tournament, finishing as the highest scorers in the competition. The BMS team scored 30 goals across four short games, eventually winning 6-1 in the final. Earlier in the competition, they won 5-2 and 9-4 before a 10-3 win in the semi-finals. The boys put in a huge amount of effort and remained resilient and focused throughout.



Some confident performances from our Under-18 girls' water polo team saw them come second in the English Schools' Swimming Association (ESSA) Plate final on Monday 18 March 2024. The team stormed through to the final with three wins in a row. They picked up 9-0 and 7-1 wins in the group stages before winning 3-2 in the semi-finals of the competition, which was held at Marlborough College in Wiltshire.



Year 8 students Olivia and Paige represented the East region in the Swim England Talent Games Under-14s Girls competition on Saturday 08 and Sunday 09 July 2024. They were part of a team that came out on top with a perfect record, winning every game and securing a maximum eight points from their two matches. The wins, a 10-7 victory over South and 19-5 triumph against North East, followed successes earlier in the year and took place at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre used during the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Sport

Athletics



Athlete Becca Scott finished third in the Women's 60m Para Sprint Final at the UK Athletics Indoor Championships in February 2024. Year 13 student Becca, who is also an excellent long jumper, set a new personal best to claim the bronze medal in front of a sell-out crowd at the Utilita Arena in Birmingham. Becca ran an excellent time of 8.49, which is an improvement on her most recent PB set only three weeks prior to the final.

Badminton

There was success at the Under 17s Bedfordshire Junior County Restricted badminton tournament on Sunday 14 April 2024. Year 12 student Harriet Chaplin took silver in the under-17s girls doubles and Year 7 student Ashwith Vuggumudi earned a silver medal in the under-13s singles competition. The tournament is restricted to those living or playing in Bedfordshire.

Table Tennis

Rising table tennis star Ben Dunkley has been selected to represent England at the ISF (International School Sport Federation) World Schools Championships. Year 12 student Ben will compete in the Boys Under-18s group at the tournament, which takes place in Bahrain from Wednesday 23 October until Friday 01 November 2024. Ben has played for Table Tennis England at a number of different age grades since taking up the sport, travelling across Europe for various competitions. He also represented England B at the Senior Schools International competition alongside teammate Starry Sheung in the summer of 2023. The pair remained unbeaten in four matches against teams from across the UK, finishing three of these games 5-0, before going on to win Gold in the final against the England A team.



Cricket

The under-14A cricket team have taken a huge step towards National Cup qualification with a three-wicket victory at Bedford School on Tuesday 25 June 2024. In a keenly contested match that could have gone either way, Team BMS bowled the hosts out for 137 inside 20 overs and chased down the run total with just two balls to spare. Sabir was player of the match, scoring 67 not out and taking two wickets. Both teams were a credit to their schools during a competitive and well-natured game.



Squash

The Under-13 girls' squash team were named the second best Key Stage 3 team in the country following the National Schools Championships at Edgbaston Priory Club on Wednesday 13 March 2024. They won their first match comfortably, before winning their semi-final and securing their place in the final. After an extremely tough match, they lost 3-2 and therefore finished runners-up in the KS3 Girls Championship. It marks an amazing achievement which has been three years in the making for this team who have worked tirelessly week in, week out both on and off the courts.



Basketball

Kaiya, Year 11, has continued to excel in basketball this year, with her latest success coming in the form of an unbeaten National League campaign with her club side Milton Keynes Breakers Basketball Club. Kaiya and the Under-16s girls Breakers team won all 16 fixtures this season before being crowned national champions at the Basketball England Final Fours in Manchester on Sunday 05 May 2024. Kaiya has been representing England at Under-16s level for the past three years and has now been given a place at Coppleston Basketball Academy in Ipswich, where she will complete her A-Levels and continue to play elite basketball.

Sport

Rugby

The U11A rugby squad won all 11 of their matches and finished their season completely unbeaten this year. It was a joy to see their continued development under the guidance of their coach, former England international rugby player Rocky Clarke.



Year 13 student Kieran Perkins joined OBM Rafe Witheat (2017-22) in the Northampton Saints starting line-up for the Under-18 Academy League Final in February 2024. Saints took on Bath at Kingsholm in Gloucester after each side topped the North and South pools respectively. Kieran, Rafe and Year 13 student Will Tinley have all played an important part for the team this season.



Continued success for BMS rugby stars

Some of our brightest rugby stars are celebrating further success with their club side, Olney RFC, having shone throughout the season for BMS. Sixth Form students Joe, Marcus, Thomas, Hector, Christian, Kieran, Max, James and Rafe have been integral in ensuring that Team BMS made it to the fifth round of the National Schools Vase and qualified for day two of the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens tournament. The team were also runners'-up in the Under-18s Northampton Saints 7s Series. While playing for Olney Colts, these students won the East Midlands Under-18s League One and the East Midlands Under-18s Cup. They also recently lifted the Oceanic Cup following their 40-7 win against Old Northamptonians Academy at Franklin's Gardens, the home of Northampton Saints.



BMS rugby players Charlie, Alex, Cormac and Logan, formed part of the Bedford Junior Blues Rugby team who lifted the Bedfordshire Under-14s Cup on Friday 26 April 2024. The Blues defeated Ampthill 17-15 in a nail-biting final at the Athletic Club ground, with Logan being named man of the match for his performance.



Rowing

Olivia signs for USA rowing scholarship

Talented Year 13 athlete Olivia Johnson has been offered a competitive rowing scholarship by the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, USA. This will cover tuition, housing, travel, kit and food whilst she trains and studies for a degree in Sport Science, beginning in August 2024.

A keen rower since Year 9, Olivia has been a staple of the senior girls' crews in recent years, making history with the WJ18 4x as the first female BMS team to win a race at Henley Royal Regatta (HRR) in 2022.

Having proved her aptitude on the national circuit, Olivia was contacted by representatives from international universities at the beginning of her time in the Sixth Form. She said: "I was actually scouted by another university alongside Tulsa, so I flew out to see both in October 2023. I chose Tulsa because I liked the coaches a lot, and they had a lot more international students like me." She was officially signed for the team in early November.

Olivia will train for a maximum of 20 hours per week alongside her studies. The university boasts stunning sports facilities, including the 6,500 square foot Jack Zink Indoor Rowing Center adjoined to a 5,000 square foot boat storage facility. This is set along the Verdigris River, part of the

Mississippi River watershed, along which the team have a natural setting of 18 miles to practice. The University of Tulsa rowing team took home multiple silver medals at the 2023 American Athletic Conference (AAC) Championship, and their rowers consistently achieve an excellent Grade Point Average (GPA) alongside their sport. In fact, two of their athletes have won the AAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year award, which requires them to maintain a GPA of 3.50 or higher (equivalent to a high-range 2:1 grade) whilst competing in a minimum of 75% of spring races.

Mr Bavington, Director of Rowing at BMS, added: "Olivia first appeared on our radar as one of very few students who logged onto every online session we ran through the various lockdowns. Since then, she has been a constant of the senior girls' crews, competing at HRR and on the national circuit numerous times. Seeing Olivia obtain this amazing opportunity is a really proud moment for all of us in the department and we will continue to follow her rowing career with keen interest."



Gymnastics

Year 11 gymnast Callum Inkson has been selected for the British Gymnastics GBR Junior Boys Squad for 2024. This follows a highly successful year for him competing at the 2023 Jaffa Trampoline, Tumbling and DMT British Championships and winning gold at the Loulé Cup in Portugal.

Callum went on to win gold in the 15-16 age category at the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) British qualifiers in Telford on 18-19 May 2024. His success ensures his place at the FIG Nationals Weekend in September. Callum has also been chosen as a supported athlete by the GLL Sport Foundation, which offers funding, training and fitness and health support to selected sportspeople.



Celebrating *BMS Milestones*

Fifty years since BMS left the town centre site

This year marks 50 years since BMS staff and students left the town centre site for the very last time, heading for pastures new at the current site on Manton Lane.

On 23 April 1974, the Headmaster, Brian Kemball-Cook and Head of School, Ian Wylie (1968-74), led a procession consisting of the Heads of the eight Houses carrying the school standard, followed by boys and guests of the school, from the old site in Harpur Street, along Clapham Road and up the hill to the new building.

To mark this occasion, the OBM Club Team paid a visit to the old school building and were shown behind the scenes by Harpur Centre Manager, Samantha Laycock.

They were invited into the main tower through the central arch of the Blore façade, which now accommodates offices and meeting rooms for the Harpur Centre staff. Laid out on the table in the meeting room were some original plans for the site following the departure of Bedford Modern School staff and students. These plans were only recently discovered as they were hidden in a priest hole for more than 40 years, and as such, they were in perfect condition.

It was thanks to the efforts of OBM and former Archivist, Richard Wildman (1956-65) that the beautiful Blore Façade was retained as part of the Harpur Centre design.

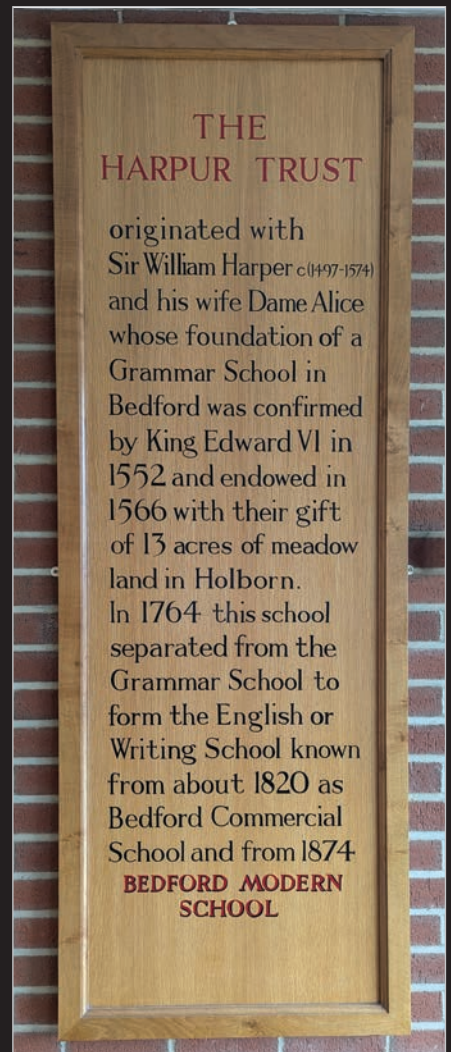


BMS became a co-educational school twenty years ago

In September 2003 we welcomed girls to BMS for the very first time. We delved into the school's archive of photographs and found many examples of the positive impact co-education has had on all aspects of school life.



Did you know that this academic year also marks 150 years since the school was named Bedford Modern School?



Memory *Stir*

Julian 'Jim' Smith (1965-72)

writes: 'This photograph of the school's Railway Society was taken, I'd guess, around 1968/9. I'm in the back row, 4th from right with the scarf and we were on a trip to either West Hampstead power signal box, or Bletchley signal box - both were brand new then and with state-of-the-art electronic signalling rather than the levers you see signal men pulling in old films.'



Chris Fitt (2004-06)

In January 2024 Chris Fitt enjoyed a weekend away with fellow OBMs and their partners. Shown in the photo along with Chris are Clark Comer, Daniel Woodward, Chris Allen Jamie Mancini, John Fay, Luke Presswell, Matthew Kay, Katy Berrill, Alex Jones and Jessie Jones (née Lyle).



Caryl Jones, daughter of the late Roger Gwynne-Jones (1962-93)

We were contacted by the daughter of the late BMS Chemistry teacher, Roger Gwynne-Jones, as she was in possession of a Stanley Orchard painting of the old school that her late father had commissioned, and that she wished to donate to the school as a gift.

In addition, Caryl shared with us a photograph of one of Roger's classes, that had been signed by the students.



More details on Roger's life can be found in the Obituary section.

Barrie Saxton (1948-52)

We were contacted by Barrie's stepson, Adam Beatty, who wished to commission a birthday cake for Barrie's 88th birthday featuring the school crest from his time at the school. We provided the crest and Barrie was very moved by the surprise birthday cake.



Herbert 'Norman' Daniels (1934-40)

Herbert celebrated his 100th birthday on 25 February 2024, receiving cards from King Charles III and the OBM Club. Sadly, Herbert has since passed away, but to our knowledge he was the oldest living OBM at the time of his birthday. Herbert celebrated the occasion surrounded by family.

Herbert wrote: 'In 1934 I passed the scholarship and went to Bedford Modern School. I was pleased, as it was a rugby-playing school, and I had been bitten by the rugby bug rather early. I have a photograph of the school under-15 team 1938 with me on it. The coach was an English master named EJ Stevens, whose enthusiasm for the English Language was infectious and I came to enjoy drama and poetry.'

On my 16th birthday a message came through to the classroom that I was to go to the Headmaster's study. Filled with trepidation and not knowing what I had done, I made my way there. When I arrived at the Headmaster's Study, I was told "You are a very lucky boy" and this is how I found out I was to be articled to my uncle in Kings Lynn, who was a Chartered Accountant. I didn't want to leave school as I had hopes of playing for the 1st XV, but this didn't cut much ice with my parents. So off I went to a strange town knowing only my mother's relatives.'



Paul Middleton (1950-61)

In June 2024, Paul visited his old school friend Peter Habicht (1952-59) and his wife, Annette, at their home in Massachusetts. He had a fantastic holiday and during the trip Peter's restored E-type Jaguar won best in show at the Tri-State Mopar Club All Makes and Models Show. Paul had been with Peter in London when he purchased the car in 1968.



Mike Cleal (1952-59)

In September 2023, Mike celebrated his 80th birthday and got in touch with the OBM Club upon receipt of his birthday card.

Mike writes: 'The 80th birthday card was a most welcome surprise – so in return a few memories of days at BMS. Undoubtedly Molly Kingston had an enormous influence culminating in the cubs Grand Howl in Ampthill Park in 1954.'

In the Senior School the highlight of the morning assembly for me was Fred Rawlings improvising on the school organ, to the left of the stage. Ever since, classical organ has been an ongoing love of mine. His No 2 Jim Railton introduced me to his church choir and we had many happy Sundays and concerts at St Andrews.

Disposal of the white button on the school cap was such an achievement as indeed much later was the dreaded march forward of 15 paces without command at the school inspection – we lived in fear of RSM Pitthers!

The Gown Show and the following year *Let's Face It* performed by the staff were amazing – such theatrical and humorous talent on display – one wonders how JET reacted.

I left school at age sixteen to join Westminster Bank – later NatWest, who decided Branch Managers were no longer required at age 52 and this resulted in an extended retirement!



My wife and I have wandered the country as my career took me to the south and west, living in and doing up eight houses. In more recent times we had 14 great years in The Lakes. We have now moved to the Herts/Essex borders to spend quality time with our children and grandchildren.

Finally does anyone remember the aroma in Dan Dickey's room when they were brewing at Charlie Wells and the three line whip for the funeral of Mr Volz in St Pauls – quite an event!

Memory *Stir*

**Johnny
Luk**
(2003-09)

Johnny remembers being part of the BMS Men's 1st VIII winning the National Schools Gold Medal in 2009. The team trained six days a week for a year for this race, including through the holidays. This was a redemption story, a year before, when Johnny was Captain of Boats, the 1st VIII sank in the same race due to bad weather!



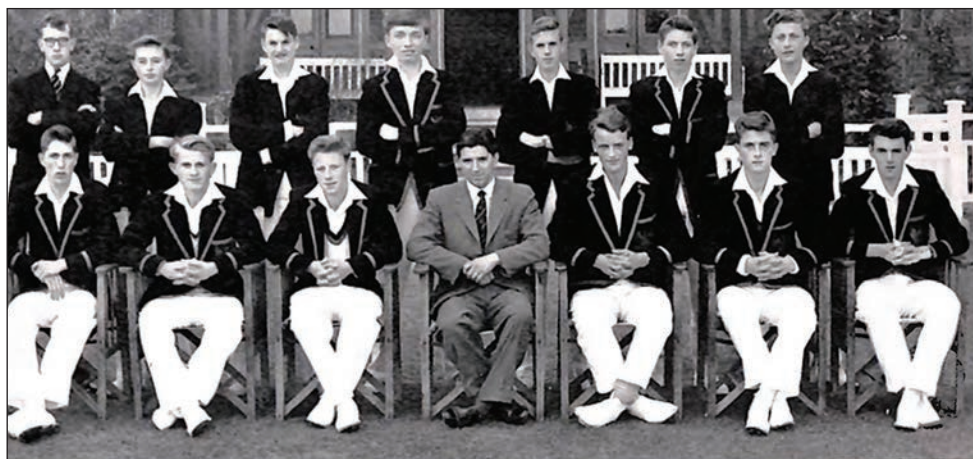
**Richard
Claridge**
(Student 1953-61, Staff 1967-2000)

writes: 'On hearing that George Cullen (Staff 1954-89) had died, I recalled a winter scene at the School Field after I joined the Staff on my return to BMS in the late sixties. First and Second Form Games. The pitches were frozen, so George gave the academic staff who had been drafted for a session of Games the afternoon off. With me in tow to chivvy the stragglers, he orchestrated mass exercise for two hundred excitable little boys. "In single file behind Szymanski, running round the outside of the New Field, off you go!" Whistle. "Now hopping on the left foot!" Whistle. "Running round the outside!" Whistle. "Now hopping on the right foot!" The projection of authority was spell-binding. That extraordinary high-pitched, sing-song voice had the penetrating power of a police siren wailing on Clapham Road.

In the Staff Room, at a time of radical change and heated controversy (post JET), George was a formidable spokesman for 'traditional standards'. He opposed vigorously a reduction in Games time, concerned to safeguard BMS's reputation for sport, the legacy of the legendary PJ King. Always hoping for an eager young sportsman who

might coach a team, he was "not too keen" on the appointments of Alison Light, Monica Simons (later Monica Hetherington) and Helena Fraser to the English department. Clearly, they would bring no benefit to BMS rugby! Yet in his relations with the young ladies, he was, of course, the perfect gentleman. Arguments over reforms became fractious, but George did not let differences of opinion damage friendship. He combined candour with courtesy, and was never devious. Boys knew where they stood with George - a stickler for the rules, his strictness tempered by good humour. Like his colleagues, boys recognised his decency, his integrity.

In his English teaching, George emphasised accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. In the nets, he taught us the correct position of our feet to execute a cover-drive, and on Big Side the angle to launch a successful tackle. This was not just a preoccupation with technique, but a matter of principle. He encouraged flair, of course he did - he was himself renowned as a twinkle-toes three-quarter with Leicester Tigers, but getting the basics right came first. And that applied to his conduct in life. To me, as to countless others, George is a role-model, whose basic values are encapsulated in two words - sportsman, gentleman.'



1ST XI, 1960.
A. Roberts, D. J. Collinson, E. M. Cooper, R. B. Gilliatt, P. Dyer-Smith, G. R. Nevitte, P. J. Bunyan,
S. M. Holder, R. Dyer-Smith, R. B. Claridge (Capt.), Mr. G. H. Cullen, W. S. Kippax, A. D. Curtis, J. M. Bunker.
Photograph by F. Jewell-Harrison.

**David
Lorimer**
(1941-50)

writes: 'After the war finished a camp was arranged for the CCF at East Harling near Thetford in Norfolk. I think we were transported there by train as the line was still open from Bedford to Cambridge and we must have been routed through to reach East Harling eventually.

I am not sure the year it took place but it was possibly 1947 or 1948.

We were provided with tented accommodation and the guys I tented with are in the photo of the friends with whom we experienced our first camp. You will see we all dressed smartly in our leisure hours.

The smiling faces belong to Mark Hughes, Cyril Ian Brown, David Lorimer, David Hales, Ken Humberstone and Don Johnston.' [L to R]



Martin Charles Rutter (1964-72)

Martin was born in Stoke-on-Trent in 1954 and the family moved to Bedford in 1960. He began at BMS Junior School in 1964 and continued through the school until he left to go to University in 1972. He studied Biological Sciences at Wolverhampton, working at Milton Ernest Garden Centre and then at Mander College in Bedford.

During this time he felt the call to ordained ministry and was selected for ordination in the Church of England. Martin then went on to train at Salisbury & Wells Theological College, gaining an additional degree in Theology from Southampton University.

Martin, along with his wife Val, then returned to the Midlands and was ordained in Lichfield Cathedral in 1979. He served his whole ministry in the Lichfield Diocese, beginning at Cannock before moving on to Uttoxeter, Hill Top West Bromwich and finally Great Barr.

He retired at the end of August 2023 after 44 years of full-time ordained ministry. In 2016 he received the honorary post of Prebendary of Lichfield Cathedral for his services to the parishes and diocese of Lichfield.

In retirement Martin is looking forward to continuing his biological and ecological interests, having time to explore local and family history, his love of the writings of Tolkien, and the delights of grandchildren.



Clive Dolan (1957-64)

Ed Glass (1955-64)

Brian Hunt (1958-64)

Clive, Ed and Brian brought together 28 OBM's who left in 1964 at a reunion held on 17 May 2024 at The Kingfisher, Bedford. The OBM's enjoyed a three-course meal and a few drinks with old friends, whilst reminiscing about their school days. Headmaster, David Payne, also made an appearance and enjoyed meeting so many former students as such a fantastic event.



David Bedingfeld (1958-68)

David made a fantastic find when he was rummaging through some old storage. He explained: 'When he had such a successful Colts VIII year, Bill Maltby - the long-time boatman was so impressed that he took a set of old rowing oars, to cut down and he signed the blades and presented them to the entire crew. That was quite a special moment - one to remember.'

'The great memories came flooding back to me over our incredibly successful eight which was formed in Colts and went on to record many regatta and head of river successes right through to 1st VIII. A special mention for Dave Berry, our amazing coach, for his vision in building a crew and his belief. In addition, post-school Olympians, our crew mates, John Yallop and Peter Knapp.'



Memory *Stir*

Caroline Attwood, daughter of the late

**Ken
Hedges**
(c 1946-55)

Caroline Attwood's father, Ken Hedges, was Head of Geography and was heavily involved in BMS swimming and the CCF. Caroline was good friends with Jenny King, daughter of PJ King (Staff 1922-66) and spent a great deal of time at School House, in Warwick Avenue. She visited the school in February 2024 to deliver some photographs and films for the archive, and the memories came flooding back.

Caroline writes: 'It was an interesting experience, visiting BMS after a period of almost 70 years. A miscellany of memories came flooding back. Fragments of voices and faces, scenes, and experiences. The playing fields, to a small child of four or five as I was then, were a vast stretch of green, the rugby posts towering above me as I trotted along, on short legs behind my big brother Michael and my father, Ken Hedges, as they watched the matches. Here the CCF rehearsed for parades, with that wonderful purring roll of drums and the band bursting into musical life as they marched and



Caroline in the empty pool, aged 4

countermarched. I particularly loved the drums, spending many an hour standing in the area outside the swimming pool, adjacent to the fives courts, watching and listening in awe as they practiced. The Drum Major was a source of considerable interest, impressing Mike and I to the point where we decided to give it a try using my mother's clothes prop. A faulty throw and a bruised head accompanied by a lot of howling on my part rapidly put paid to the idea, with the agreement that it was better left to the experts. As compensation we were both taught how to produce a fairly decent drum roll on the dining room table using our father's drumsticks. I do clearly recall one of the CCF inspections, after which a very tall man in a very posh uniform came to tea. I blithely informed our guest, the inspecting officer, that my mother had borrowed the silver teapot and jug especially for him and they really belonged to the lady next door.

Much of what I recall centres around the pool and its surrounding area as my father was heavily involved in the CCF and swimming teams. Every Saturday morning, I was perched on the bar of his old Raleigh bike (a most uncomfortable position to occupy) and we pedalled to the pool from home on Warwick Avenue, with my brother on his small bicycle just keeping up behind us. Mike was a far more assiduous pupil than I, and far more amenable to training. I was a recalcitrant brat who refused to venture beyond the halfway point, preferring to splash around in the shallow end while the two chaps energetically ploughed up and down the pool together. The deep end was, to me, a place of terror and I clearly recall Bill Rose, a colleague of my father's, trying in vain to convince me that there was nothing to be afraid of. After all, he pointed out, the surface of the water was flat all the way up the pool to the very end - so it wasn't really deep. I was not convinced. One day they emptied the pool to repair it and I ventured into the depths, peered up at the huge walls around me and knew I had been right all along. I became a competent swimmer under firm parental tutelage, but Mike was far more ambitious and went on, coached, and accompanied by our father, to undertake the Long Swim doing backstroke. He was, I think, the youngest person to

complete the course, being only eight at the time. Swimming was my father's passion and I know now how much pride and energy he devoted to his boys and the teams. The only fly in the ointment for him was my mother's disapproval of the Cambridge Blue blazer he liked to wear, referring to it rather sniffily as his "ice-cream salesman outfit."

Of the staff I can recall PJ and Wendy King most clearly as "Uncle" PJ was father to Jenny who was my friend from infancy to when we left Bedford in 1955. I learnt to read in the nursery in the boarding house at the end of Warwick Avenue, using Noddy books that have now probably been doctored to protect those of a sensitive disposition. Some of the staff remained friends with my parents after we left and paid frequent visits until my father died in 1973. JET I do not recall at all, although I was apparently the cause of some disapproval when I heedlessly crashed into his legs and sent him staggering backwards on my visiting the common room. I was forgiven as I was only four - and a girl. My only clear memory of that event is of a room full of kindly men wearing black gowns who chatted amiably to each other and me, had pipes and cigarettes that filled the air with smoke and told me that the floorboards were wonky because the place was very old.

It was a delightful, but also strange, experience to visit the "new" school. I finally got around to delivering films of the CCF to the archives, plus photos of the swimming teams. The intention always was to hand them over to the school but having travelled and lived abroad for a long time, plus running my own business, it always seemed to get put on ice. I apologise for being so tardy but hope that both current and past pupils enjoy looking at them and that for some they stir happy memories of past times. Times that seem so long ago and yet oddly close, and so much more relaxed and gentler in pace - or so it seems on looking back. That, however, could just be my age!

Much has changed but one thing did strike me as being no different - the playing fields are still vast, and the rugby goal posts still tower well above my head.'

Farewell to long-serving members of staff

In July 2024 we said farewell to three long-serving teachers: Mrs Reed, Mr Else and Mr Rex, who retired after collectively dedicating more than 75 years to BMS.

Mrs Reed joined the school from Dame Alice School in 2011 as Head of Spanish, and set up the school's Spanish society, Los Alamos. She introduced the Rosas work experience trip to the school for Years 12 and 13, which was a unique opportunity to allow the students to flourish, using their language skills in real life situations. With her warm and vibrant personality, she has been a fabulous influence on staff and students alike.

Mr Else, Assistant Head for Years 9 to 11, left after 31 years having joined BMS in September 1993. Since then, he has taught Chemistry and Physics, been an Examinations Officer, Head of Chemistry and Head of Science. He has managed the 3rd XI football team for most of the last 25

years and coached U13 cricket for around 10 years. Mr Else was instrumental in developing the BMS Science Centre opened in 2017 and accompanied many sports tours during his time here.

Mr Rex was at BMS for 35 years, starting in September 1989. He has been a Teacher of PE, U15 Rugby Coach, Head of Athletics, Boarding House Master, Teacher of Physics, the Head of Middle School Science, Head of Year and Head of Army CCF. He has also co-ordinated the Year 8 Outward Bound trip to Aberdovey. During Mr Rex's tenure he coached the Under-15s rugby team to the Daily Mail National Cup Final at Twickenham in 1991 and has participated in numerous overseas residential trips.

Although we will miss all three of them greatly here at school, we would like to thank them unreservedly for all they have done for BMS and wish them every happiness as they start the next exciting chapters of their lives.



1968 Station Wagon Landrover



In March 2024, we were contacted by a gentleman who had purchased a derelict 1968 Station Wagon Land Rover with the intention of restoring it. Hidden beneath the grime, he discovered the Bedford Modern School crest and got in touch to find out more about the history of the vehicle. A former staff member confirmed that it was indeed owned by the school and used for CCF trips. We are sure these photos will bring back memories for many OBMs.

Tom Sharp (2012-19)

In May 2024, Police Constable Tom was working at the Radio 1 Big Weekend in Luton when he bumped into fellow OBMs Padmi Fordham (2012-19) and Sarah Baxter (2009-19) who were attending the event.



Memory *Stir*

Always Welcome Back

Below are just a few of the OBM's who we have welcomed back for visits, tours and reunions this year.

Dave Hurley (1972-82) and
Geoffrey Hurley (1970-78)



On 21 March 2024, brothers Dave and Geoffrey visited the school during Geoffrey's trip to Bedford from Australia, which is where he now lives. During their school days, along with their late brother Philip Hurley (1964-71), they had spells as boarders in Shakespeare House and enjoyed many sports, particularly water polo and rugby. They reminisced about their school days as they were shown around the site and shared stories of their time as boarders. They visited the cricket pavilion and were happy to see their names on the boards, and Head of Swimming and Water Polo, Mrs Hawken, met them at the pool to update them with news on our current water polo success.

Alex Meade (2004-15)



On 4 October 2023, Alex returned to BMS to deliver a talk to Year 13 students on his experience of undertaking apprenticeships, followed by a tour of the school. Alex enjoyed the chance to reminisce and to meet and chat to many of his former teachers along the way.

Chris Boutle (1957-65) and
Michael Baker (1958-65)



Michael and Chris, along with Chris's wife Elizabeth, came along to the school ahead of their reunion at The Kingfisher (formerly The Barns Hotel) in May 2024. They were impressed with the facilities, particularly the Science Centre and the DT workshop and were looking forward to catching up with old friends in the evening.

James Yarland
(1996-2005)



James took a trip down memory lane on Wednesday 03 July 2024, by paying a visit to BMS. He was pleased to be taken on a tour by the OBM Team, during which he reminisced about his time at school and even bumped into former teachers. James was visiting the UK from New Zealand, where he now lives.

OBMs in attendance at the BMS 'Loving your Work' Event

On Wednesday 14 February, BMS celebrated Valentine's Day in a rather unique way, by welcoming 35 volunteers, the majority of whom were OBM's, to take part in a special 'Loving Your Work' careers fair. The special guests were from sectors such as finance, marketing, aviation, politics, law and performing arts and they gave up their time willingly to speak to the Year 12 students about why they love their jobs. Students engaged enthusiastically in discussions about their own futures and the event was a great success. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered. If you're interested in supporting future careers events, please keep an eye on the monthly news bulletins for opportunities as they arise.



Academic Awards

On Friday 07 July 2023 we celebrated individual academic achievement across all subject areas in the Senior School at the 2023 Academic awards. It was an absolute pleasure to welcome property expert, writer and broadcaster Kunle Barker (1984-91) as our Guest of Honour and to listen to some impactful speeches from members of our outgoing Student Leadership Team.



Junior School Prize Giving

The annual Junior School prize-giving ceremony celebrates the fantastic achievements of BMS's youngest students.

On Thursday 06 July 2023 Madeleine Burton (2003-14) returned as Guest of Honour for the 2023 event. Madeleine was among the first cohort of girls to join BMS when it became co-educational in 2003.

The 2024 event was held on Thursday 04 July 2024 at the Biddenham site, and Chris Edge, currently a corporate lawyer at CMS London, returned to present the awards.



Artistic Awards

On Wednesday 13 July 2023, Sophie King (2009-11) returned to the school as Guest of Honour at the Artistic Achievement Awards, which recognise the wealth of creative talent at BMS. The prize-giving was interspersed with live performances and specially designed montages showcasing the highlights from the year.

With the Howard Hall out of action in 2024, there was a very different format to the event held on 05 July. Students in Years 11-13 were joined by their guests for a meal in the Rutherford Building followed by the presentation of the awards by special guest, documentary filmmaker and TV producer, Hannah Blake, née Keep (2005-07). Students were recognised for their achievements across a range of disciplines including drama, dance, art, creative writing, music and film studies.



Obituaries

Roger Gwynne Jones Staff 1963-93

Died 05 October 2022.



David Gwynne Jones (1970-80), Roger's son, writes: 'Roger Gwynne Jones (RGJ) died in 2022 after a short illness. He was born in Treorchy and educated at Cardiff High School becoming Head Boy and also a Queen's Scout. After National Service in the Navy, he read Natural Sciences at Queens' College, Cambridge which had a huge impact on him. He recalls being invited to Frederick Sanger's Nobel Prize party for the discovery of insulin where he said he had never seen so much champagne before. He maintained a close connection with Queens' for the rest of his life and directed many OBMs there including both his sons. After a short period teaching at Woking Grammar School, he moved to Bedford Modern School to teach chemistry. There he formed part of a long-standing and successful triumvirate with Dave Berry and Malcom James, joined in later years by Geoff Nicholson.

He continued in the Royal Navy reserve for many years retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and was awarded the Reserve Decoration. However, rather than helping Dan Dickey with the Navy CCF he chose to run the school Scout group instead. For many years he was Careers Master. He had a lead role in organising the move from the old school (Now the Harpur Centre) to the current site on Manton Lane and the official opening by the Queen. In later years he organised the school timetable which he meticulously wrote out on large sheets of plain white paper in his immaculate handwriting. He was of a generation that always wore a suit and tie and usually a gown in class, often with a rose from his garden in his lapel. He had the ability to quieten down a room of noisy boys by just walking in, even if it was someone else's class.

In 1973 he was elected to the Bedford District Council as a councillor and was honoured as an Alderman of the Borough in 1996. He took early retirement from BMS in 1993 but embarked on a second career as a County Councillor. He also became a Governor of the Harpur Trust and rated the development of Pilgrims pre-preparatory school as one of his career highlights. He continued his love of gardening, had a regular bridge group and maintained close contact with his children and grandchildren with several trips to New Zealand where he developed a taste for Sauvignon Blanc. The untimely death of his second wife Jennie, COVID lockdowns and increasing frailty took their toll in later years.

He is survived by David (1970-1980), Andrew (1972-1982), Caryl (Dame Alice Harpur School 1974-1984), Nick Prigg (1981-1990) and Phil Prigg (1982-1992). The family have donated a watercolour of the old BMS by Stanley Orchard that Roger commissioned.'

Peter 'John' Borna 1964-70

School House. Died 07 January 2023.

Sandra Borna, Peter's wife, writes: 'Peter 'John' Borna attended the school as a boarder from 1963 to 1970. His nickname from the early days was 'Bubbles' or 'Bubs' for reasons unknown!

John fondly remembered his time at Bedford Modern School which encouraged his great interest in sport, particularly rowing, rugby and cricket. This continued for the rest of his life.

Having left Loughborough College, John entered the world of teaching and coached, cajoled and encouraged many children to achieve excellence, or at the very least participation, in a wide range of sports. John was extremely competitive but also put great importance on the rules, laws and spirit of the game, whichever sport that may be.

Not only was John a respected coach, umpire, referee and scorer, but he was also the keenest of participants. He looked forward to his frosty mornings with The Wagon and Horses in the Chesham Sunday League with great relish.

He made sure he was always early, partly to warm up, but mostly to avoid playing in goal as the last to turn up often had to do. As a lifelong Manchester City fan, John admired Colin Bell, but played more in the robust style of a Tommy Smith or 'Chopper' Harris. His fondest footballing memory involved being escorted off a Greek island after he and his friends had beaten the local semi-professional football team in a particularly feisty encounter.

John played rugby for Beaconsfield for many years. He was the 'hooker', a position he believed to be far more skilful and cerebral than most others on the pitch. In the summer John played cricket for Fencibles, Amersham

and finally Amersham Hill where he helped the club to Sunday League and Chiltern League titles over several years. John was a solid and resolute batsman, capable of performing anywhere in the batting order. However, his real skill lay in his bowling, varying pace and incorporating off and leg spin, swing and dip, making him a prolific wicket taker.

John played league squash with Beaconsfield to a high standard, tennis socially with his brothers and was integral to successive promotions for AHCC in the Amersham and Chesham Table Tennis Leagues. John's mother and father were immensely proud of him when he competed in and finished his first London Marathon. He repeated this feat a number of times, also completing the New York Marathon plus several half marathons which raised a significant amount of money for charity.

John was a qualified windsurfing instructor and capable skier, both downhill and on water. He could turn his hand to most sports, even helping his brother to win the Middlesex Darts Open when his regular partner was not available.

Recently John had become involved in Buckinghamshire's Over Sixties and Seventies cricket teams as a scorer and was hoping to get fit for the forthcoming season and play. Unfortunately, his innings was cut short and, like one of his infamous in-swinging yorkers, he will be missed.

John leaves behind his wife, Sandra, daughter, Olivia and two brothers, Robin and Simon.'



Nigel Anderson Graham King

1952-61

East House. Died 06 March 2023.

Nigel's sister, Diana, writes: 'Nigel was born in Sunderland on 14 June 1943, where our mother was living with her sisters while our father was serving in the army. After the war, the family returned to Bedford, where our parents had taught previously. Nigel was a pupil at Goldington Road School for four years and then attended Bedford Modern School, where he enjoyed cricket, rugby, fives and fencing. After leaving school, Nigel studied Architectural Design in Leicester, followed by another year in Manchester, where he met his future wife, Margaret.

When he had completed his studies, Nigel travelled to Australia via Turkey, Afghanistan and Indonesia. He arrived in Darwin and found employment. He visited Alice Springs, Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier Reef, and eventually worked in Sydney for several months before returning to England.

Nigel had an interesting and varied career as an architect in London which included working on the development of St Katherine's Dock, as well as the restoration of Kensington Palace.

Nigel and Margaret were married in London in 1978 and, in 1982, spent seven months travelling around Sri Lanka and India, ending up in Kashmir and Ladakh. After another period of work, they went to Germany to spend some time with Margaret's maternal relatives and lived in a picturesque woodland barn near Hamburg. In 1987, their son Robert was born and shortly afterwards the family settled in Evington, on the outskirts of Leicester. Nigel had obtained employment as an architect with Leicestershire County Council, where he remained until he retired.



Nigel and Margaret were both diagnosed with cancer soon after they retired and Margaret sadly passed away five years later in 2013. Her father died later that year and Nigel assumed responsibility for the welfare of her sister Cathy for the remaining seven years of her life. Nigel consoled himself in his loss by pursuing a number of interests. He enjoyed working on his allotment, latterly with the help of Robert's partner Joanna, with whom he spent many evenings discussing what should be done.

He was a talented artist and belonged to several art groups, producing a variety of artwork – portraits, landscapes and many other subjects. He also took up country dancing, where he met Jennifer. They became devoted companions, sharing their interests and going on holiday together.

Nigel greatly appreciated the support of Robert and Joanna during his final years and delighted in the company of their daughter Emily. His second granddaughter, Rosie, was born in 2024.

In January 2023, Nigel's treatment was discontinued, and in February, he went into the Leicestershire and Rutland Hospice. He passed away peacefully on 6 March, with his loved ones around him. Nigel was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, known for his enthusiasm for life and kindness towards family and friends. He bore many years of treatment with fortitude and was determined to enjoy life as fully as possible. He will be remembered with love and affection by all who knew him.'

Obituaries

William 'Bill' Kreis 1939-48

East House. Died 21 June 2023.



William's nephew, James Richardson, writes: 'Born in Bradford to Swiss parents, Bill moved to Bedford as a young boy when his father took up a position with the Britannia Iron & Steel Works, following its acquisition by the Swiss company George Fischer. Bill attended Bedford Modern School during the war years and it was during that time that he developed a life-long love for music, in particular classical music and jazz. He tried his hand at all sorts of instruments and was to become an accomplished pianist and organist. A former pupil of Dame Alice School at the time said Bill would play jazz on the piano at the traditional end of term get-together and on one occasion left a number of girls swooning with his rendition of *In a Monastery Garden*.

Following a stint of national service in Trieste, Bill joined Fraser Son and Mackenzie in Bedford where he learned his piano tuning skills. When Carlows took over the company, Bill left to work as a self-employed tuner. In 1970, Bill opened a piano shop in Bromham Road and his relationship with Bedford Modern School continued as he secured the contract to maintain and tune the school's pianos as well as those at Dame Alice School and the High School. Bill also maintained the concert pianos at The Stables, Wavendon, Bedford Corn Exchange and the Royal & Derngate in Northampton. In the 1950s Bill played piano in

a jazz band as well as percussion in the Bedford Symphony Orchestra. He served for many years on the committee of the Pianoforte Tuners Association and was a life member of the Royal College of Organists. Despite wowing the girls of Dame Alice at school, Bill remained a bachelor. He would tease his sister by asking her to come and meet his new 'girlfriend', only for her to find that it was a piano he was talking about. Apparently, they were less trouble, only needing an occasional polish and bit of tuning.'

John Meyerstein 1946-53

South House. Died 23 June 2023.

John's wife, Gertrude writes: 'John Meyerstein was born in Germany in 1935, and grew up in England, where he attended Bedford Modern School. At age 18 he was called up for National Service in the UK. John was sent to Korea for peacekeeping with the UN forces, which had a huge impact on his outlook. After his tour of duty, John went to Singapore to work for the Borneo Motor Company. He was later transferred to the Kuala Lumpur office in Malaysia, where he met his true love, Trudy. They were married and had one daughter in KL. Later, the family moved to Hong Kong, where a second daughter was born. In 1969 the family moved to Oakville, Ontario, Canada.

John was a business consultant and representative (J. Meyerstein Canada Ltd.) for international companies, and was a real estate broker. He occasionally taught marketing at Humber and Sheridan. Later, he worked for the Town of Oakville as the General Manager for Economic Development. After nine years, John took early retirement and returned to consulting, interspersed with lots of travel. At one time he was a member of the Oakville Kiwanis and the Chamber of Commerce. He also helped Trudy deliver Meals on Wheels. John regularly met with his 'old boys club', a group of friends in the GTA



who had also been students at his school in England.

John was a keen traveler and throughout his life visited various countries in Asia, Europe, Central and South America, as well as Australia and New Zealand, mostly on business. John and Trudy spent many years as snowbirds, driving south to Florida, Texas, and the American Southwest every winter. John loved driving, and he especially loved the desert scenery. He was happy visiting his daughters and their families in the USA. These winter road trips continued until the last return drive in 2018.

John loved reading and collected books on the military and WWI and WWII. He also enjoyed watching golf, old Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies, Star Trek reruns, and rewatching his favourite movie, *Casablanca*. He liked listening to classical music when he was driving. He loved the family cats and dogs, especially Salem and Misty. A sociable person, John liked chatting with old neighbours and made it a point to get to know the new ones. He would talk with everyone, from acquaintances in the community to local business owners, and even strangers. John valued courtesy and giving a helping hand to newcomers to Canada.

John passed away on Friday, June 23, 2023. He had advanced Alzheimer's and was in Long Term Care for about 6 months, visited daily by his beloved wife, who spent hours each day with him. John and Trudy were married for 62 years. John is survived by Trudy, daughters Joanna (Tom) and Jane (Mark), and three grandchildren: Taylor, Katia, and Jasmine.'

Brian 'Jim' Pullen

1943-48

School House. Died 05 August 2023.

Jim's brother, Bill Pullen (1946-53), writes: 'My brother Jim Pullen passed away on 05 August at The Ridings Care Home in Banbury, Oxfordshire, following a relatively short illness. He was 92. He was amazingly alert right up to the end.

After graduating from BMS, Jim served his military service in the Royal Air Force, following in our father's footsteps. From there he gained valuable retail experience at the Bourne and Hollingsworth department store in London before taking over our father's business, L.A. Pullen Ltd Ladies Wear in High Wycombe. He later opened a second shop on the High Street in Princes Risborough, from which he ultimately retired to take care of his daughter Claire, who had been severely injured in a car accident. In his early years he had been a very good tennis player competing in the Buckinghamshire's Junior County Championships. The love of his life, Anne, pre-deceased him earlier in 2023, having celebrated almost 65 years together.



Jim leaves behind his son Richard and his wife Jackie and three wonderful granddaughters, Hannah, Freya and Bryony. He was a wonderful brother, husband, father and grandfather, always caring, humble, low key and ready to take care of any situation that came his way. He will be greatly missed.

A small family funeral was held on Thursday 07 September 2023 at the Banbury Crematorium.

May he rest in eternal peace.'

Anthony 'Tony' Davidson

1943-46

East House. Died 20 August 2023.

Tony Davidson was born and grew up in Bedford, the son of Frank, a First World War veteran, and Dolly, a nurse. After attending Bedford Modern School he completed his schooling in very different conditions on the Training Ship Mercury on the Hamble, where the pupils still slept in hammocks.

He joined the navy in 1949, as a junior seaman at HMS St Vincent in Gosport. There he became, for recruitment purposes, the public face of the Royal Navy. He was selected in 1950 to be painted by A R Thompson of the Royal Academy – a prolific and versatile artist whose work included posters depicting film stars, including Alec Guinness as the star of *The Man in the White Suit*. Thompson's poster of Tony was used in a series of Senior Service recruiting campaigns through the 1950s, and a version appears on the cover of Kevin Brown's 2019 study of Royal Navy fitness and morale in WW2, *Fittest of the Fleet*.

Even at this early stage of his career, Tony was more than just a face. His proudest moment came while still serving ashore, in HMS Excellent. He was selected to be part of the gun carriage team pulling HM King George VI's coffin at Windsor. For this he was



awarded the Royal Victorian Medal by a young Queen Elizabeth II in 1952.

He went on to serve in the Royal Navy's last battleship, HMS Vanguard, the frigates Ulysses and Murray and the ton class minesweepers Stubbington and Yarnton. A keen cricketer and rugby player, he was once famously flown to Malta for a rugby match, as the only passenger. On taking to the field, he not only captained the team but scored the winning try. After a spell with HMS Jaguar training gun crews and controlling her armaments, he ended his 22-year Royal Navy career as a commander and staff gunnery officer to the senior Royal Navy command in the Gulf.

In civilian life, Tony forged a new career in the financial sector, working for Hambro Life, later Allied Dunbar. In Vancouver, where he had resettled, he embarked on a very active retirement, acting as an extra in films and TV shows, including sci-fi hits *Stargate* and *X-Files*. He had a long-standing love of the theatre and had gained amateur dramatic experience while serving in Bahrain. After 19 years in Canada, he and his wife returned to the UK and settled in Cumbria where he spent his final years.

Some of the information in Anthony Davidson's obituary is taken from The Royal Navy website.

Obituaries

John Quenby

1953-58 | OBM Club President 2011

County House. Died 29 August 2023.



John's wife, Frances Maynard, writes: 'John was born in Bedfordshire (Kempston Rural) in 1941 and was a much-loved son of Margaret and grandson of Madeleine. He never knew his father, Richard Quenby, who having sailed in October 1941 with the Beds and Herts Regiment died as a Japanese prisoner of war in Burma, as did many of his contemporaries from the county. John Joined Bedford Modern School in 1953, leaving in 1958 to begin work in the family grain milling business in Bedford. When 'Quenby Grain and Milling' was sold to Unilever he joined the army, serving six months in the Intelligence Corps before moving to Australia as a '£10 Pom' for 10 years. There he developed his IT and project management skills. He returned to the UK in 1974 with his wife, Sandra, and two daughters, Georgia and Fiona and settled back into his county of birth.

He enjoyed a variety of jobs in the UK and his last employment was as Chief Executive of the RAC Motor Sports Association, the official governing body of motorsport in the United

Kingdom, a position he held until 2001. On retirement he was able to follow his other great interests, motorsports and cricket. With his second wife, Frances, he travelled and enjoyed more cricket than he had previously had time for at Lords and Northamptonshire. He raced both a Cooper Bristol Sports Prototype and an Elva Formula Junior in events in Europe and England.

He did not retire completely however, taking on several voluntary roles. This included taking over from Richard Wildman as Honorary Archivist for Bedford Modern School. He was proud to achieve considerable order for the Archive, including recruiting a team of volunteers to support a professional archivist. He also volunteered as an archivist for both the Intelligence Corps at Chicksands and The Trireme Trust, overseeing the transferral of that archive from the National Rowing Museum in Henley to Wolfson College in Cambridge. He was proud of his associations with education, enjoying many a Founder's Dinner or London Lunch with the OBMs as well as dining with the fellows and students at Wolfson. His proud association with Bedford Modern School led to his appointment as President of what was then known as the Old Bedford Modernians (now the OBM Club) in 2011-12.

He lived a rich and satisfying life and is greatly missed by his wife, children and three grandchildren (one of whom is an OBM herself!).'

Philip Brown

1958-64

East House. Died 30 August 2023.

Philip's friend, Rodney Beer (1955-65) and longtime companion Rubina Curtis write: 'Phil Brown was born in Wallsend on Tyne on 15 June 1946. Later his family moved to Farnborough where he spent a short time at Farnborough Grammar School. In 1958, the family moved again, and this time to



Bedford, and Phil started at BMS. His interest was scientific and mechanical, particularly trains and aircraft, both of which were to feature in later life. At the same time, he developed a lifelong interest in rowing. On gaining a place at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, he continued his interests as well as representing the college in the various rowing events. He also joined the University Automobile Club, and the Officer Training Corps, which furthered his interest in matters automotive, being able to drive a variety of military vehicles! On completion of his Mechanical Sciences Tripos, he worked at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Bedford. This led to a permanent post at Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough. Work was on a variety of leading-edge technical projects. He then worked for the Ministry of Defence as Procurement Executive in London. This enabled him to revive his interest in rowing, and he joined Cygnet Rowing Club, the civil service's rowing club based at Barnes Bridge. Joining Cygnet had two impacts on his life, he could row on the Tideway and represent the Club at events. He also had time to meet his longtime companion, Rubina Curtis, who is a member of Barnes Bridge Ladies Rowing Club. The two clubs shared the boathouse at Barnes Bridge. Phil became Secretary for his club, and later made a Life Vice President in recognition of his support and interest in the Club. Rubina is President of Barnes Bridge LRC.

Work continued in the aerospace world, including a tour of duty with the NATO Eurofighter Management Agency in Munich. After three years he returned to the UK and worked in the MOD(PE).

On retirement in 2006, he became more involved in Church of England matters, initially in the St Albans Diocese and then as a member of the Church of England General Synod.

He still had time to get involved with railway matters in helping to restore a 1930's railway carriage, leading to further involvement with the Friends of the National Railway Museum. In furtherance of his railway interest, he and Rubina travelled on all the major transcontinental passenger trains in the USA! On the automobile front he maintained two classic cars, a Triumph Dolomite, which he bought in 1978, and a Mini Clubman Estate also bought in 1978, which he used regularly.

Latterly Phil was involved with Emmanuel College archives. The college wished to celebrate the centenary of the start of World War I and Phil catalogued letters sent to the college from those fighting in France. This work expanded to include the addition of comprehensive footnotes that put the letters into a much more useful context, and to the creation of a roll of honour for both world wars, which was added to the college's website.

Phil died at his home in Great Cambourne, on 30 August 2023.'

BMS are grateful to Philip Brown for his generous legacy donation to the school.

Philip Souster

1944-52

East House. Died 06 September 2023.

Daughter, Alison Ralph, writes: 'Philip grew up in Bedford and was lucky enough to gain a place at Bedford Modern School, where he attended as a day pupil. During his time there he not only gained a solid education but he met the love of his life Jane, whom he later married and loved all his life.

He went on to read biochemistry at Downing College, Cambridge, where he had a thoroughly good time. After university he embarked on a career working as a biochemist for ICI and then later for Ciba Geigy. He then changed his focus at Geigy to the purchasing dept and his job took him up to London.

In the late seventies he left Geigy and formed his own management consultancy company Purcon. Although challenging at the beginning, the company flourished, allowing him to take early retirement.

During his married life he lived in Carshalton, Wilmslow, Bedfordshire and then finally Shropshire. He had a huge interest in classical music, fine wines, amateur ornithology, visiting national trust properties and worldwide travel. All of which he undertook with Jane.

Unfortunately, in 2014 he lost his wife Jane and it hit him hard. He spent the last years of his life in north Shropshire near his family, and spent the days completing the Times crossword, enjoying time with the family, watching anything sporting on tv and having a dram or two of whisky.'

BMS are grateful to Philip Souster for his generous legacy donation to the school.



William 'Bill' Fitzgerald (Fitz)

1957-63

Bill's friend, Andrew Jacob (1956-65) writes: 'Born in Islington in 1946, Bill's family moved to Bedford and in 1957 he went to BMS where he thoroughly enjoyed himself and made a great many friends. He was a good sportsman and played rugby for the school at age group levels. He was also a member of the Naval Section of the CCF (in their uniform on CCF days!). A friend and contemporary recalls how Dan Dickey (who started the Naval section) managed to get them on HMS Venus out of Portsmouth. They were put on 4-hour watches – the worst being 4 – 8am. They slept in hammocks on the mess deck with coloured ribbons attached so that the Officer of the Watch's crewman knew who to rouse and at what time. One night he awoke to find Fitz still asleep when he should have been on watch. On rousing him, Fitz said someone must have swapped his ribbons. Then smiled and admitted he had done it himself!

After school, Bill, who particularly enjoyed technical engineering drawing at BMS and had a flair for it and the precision work required, joined WH Allen, a local firm that went through various mergers and takeovers. With the advent of computer-aided design Bill honed his skills there and on leaving worked on various short-term contracts which he enjoyed and where he could pass on his experience. The variety of such work appealed to him, (at one time working on the new Wembley stadium using his love of spreadsheets!) working where and when he chose (later he had his own structural engineering company).

Away from work, Bill didn't forget BMS (he regarded his time there as some of the best years of his life) and was a member of the OBM Masonic Lodge for many years. To the regret of one of the Lodge's Past Masters who regarded him as a reliable and valuable member of the Lodge, Bill never had any

Obituaries

aspirations to become Master despite being just “the sort of hands-on” member they needed.

Fitz also kept in touch with his contemporaries through gatherings at Goldington Road, reunion dinners and the annual London House of Commons lunches. We always assembled for these at the Red Lion which perhaps fittingly was closed in March 2024 for refurbishments. This didn’t prevent us from raising (quite) a few glasses to our great friend and character who dealt with life stoically and uncomplainingly with a wicked sense of humour. It was fitting that *Bedford Today* should record his peaceful passing away and adding that he may now be “propping up a bar in heaven!” Our eternal hope is that he won’t drink the place dry before we join him!

A private and devoted family man, Bill lived the majority of his life in Apsley Guise – ironically in a house opposite one once owned (in the school years) by another friend’s family. Small world or perhaps just a huge character who spread his enthusiasm for life widely and generously.’



Chris Perry

Student 1949-55 | Staff 1960-98 | OBM Fellow 1998 | OBM Club President 1999



North House. Died 12 November 2023.

Tom Perry (1978-88), Chris’s son, writes: ‘It is with deep sorrow that we share the news of the passing of Christopher (Chris) James Perry, a beloved member of the BMS community. Born on 15 August 1937, in Birmingham, Chris peacefully departed from us on 12 November, 2023, in Frinton on Sea. His loss is deeply felt by all who knew him, and his contributions to BMS will be remembered with great fondness.

He was the youngest of three brothers (Stanley (1949-52) and David (1949-51)) having moved to Biddenham from Moseley in Birmingham when their Father became Secretary at Bedfordshire Golf Club.

My Father joined BMS as a pupil in 1949 and enjoyed his education, focusing on sports and performing arts rather than academics. He rose to be the 1st XV Captain and a County Athletics champion in the 400m hurdles, acting in several school productions, but he did not excel academically.

After National Service and a brief spell with Selfridges, he returned to BMS to be Assistant Secretary in 1960, working in a team of six. After two years as Assistant Secretary, he was promoted to School Bursar in 1962 and maintained that role until retiring in 1998.

My Father served four Headmasters and tackled a changing and often challenging educational environment. One of his foremost achievements was moving the school to its present site from the town centre—a process that took five years and was not without its challenges.

Sir John Howard, then Chairman of Governors, commented that the move would not have happened without the dedication of my Father, who had juggled keeping one school operating whilst overseeing the building of a new one.

To quote a former colleague, Richard Claridge (1967–2000): “your father was a man who put action before diplomacy – wore his heart on his sleeve – and really didn’t tolerate any nonsense.”

Chris advocated for boarding and school sports and was a loyal leader of an ever-expanding non-teaching staff at BMS. Daily school lunch was always followed by a game of dominoes in the maintenance department!

Chris saw his role as more than just a Bursar. He was a servant of the school, an enabler of its common room of intellectuals. He strived to create the best possible environment for delivering traditional education in a modern setting, a testament to his unwavering dedication and commitment to BMS.

Chris was a huge character, a kind and generous man who always put others before himself. Fellow staff members have commented that he was a great listener and was always willing to lend an ear to those who needed it.

He was an ardent OBM, founding the House of Commons London Lunch in 1982, being awarded the Club's first fellowship in 1998 and becoming OBM Club President in 1999. Often leading the school song at OBM functions, he encouraged the celebratory nature of being an OBM.

Chris retired from BMS in 1998 and moved to Frinton on Sea. Wherever he lived he always gave back. He has placed himself at the heart of the community – in Bedford and Frinton he was active as a magistrate for 29 years, a School Governor, Golf Club Captain in 2003 and more recently a church member who volunteered in the local community.

Chris will be remembered for his kind and gentle nature, great sense of humour and unwavering loyalty to his family and his beloved school.

My Father most certainly lived his life – 'at a swinging pace' – as a Son of the spreading Eagle's crest.

He was a true gentleman who will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.'

Michael 'Mike' Hedley Groom

1948-56

School House. Died 18 November 2023.



Michael's wife, Elisabeth, and sons Nick and Jonathan write: 'Michael Hedley Groom, known as Mike to his friends, was a family man, a friend, a sportsman, an animal lover.

Mike was born 87 years ago in Flitwick on 30 May 1937, and grew up in Elstow Road with his parents and sister. He spent eight years at Bedford Modern School from 1948 to 1956, and was delighted that his sons, Nicholas (1974-84) and Jonathan (1976-86), and Holly (2014-17), his first granddaughter, also attended BMS. He then had two enjoyable years of National Service with the RAF at Odiham in Hampshire, specializing in radar. This upbringing inspired him to develop into a strong, principled, and disciplined man with robust beliefs and a dedication to challenge himself, believing that something was only worth doing if it was done well. He maintained these values throughout his life, and expected the same of others.

Mike spent his working life as a histologist in the pathology laboratory at Unilever's Colworth House, which is where he met Elisabeth and they married in September

1963 – a commitment that lasted for six decades. They had indeed just reached their 60th anniversary. Colworth gave him the opportunity to mix work and sport, becoming a member of the rugby club, having already been a member of the Rushden side. He was also an active member of Colworth shoot. He was a lifelong ornithologist and expert on foreign birds, and as a keen conservationist and supporter of the natural environment he often rescued injured wild birds and nursed them back to health.

But it was Bedford Rowing Club that was his abiding passion. He was twice-voted captain of Bedford Club as well as being Vice-President, and was then elected to the prestigious Leander Club and led the Eastern Region Umpires Commission, at which point he literally rewrote the British Rowing *Rules of Racing*.

After an illustrious career on the water, a veterans' world rowing championship was introduced, held in Berlin in 1976. To get there, the crew had to navigate across East Germany at the height of the Cold War, deal with stubborn border guards, and suffer stop-and-search by the East German Police. Having driven 750 miles, they arrived in Berlin and triumphed to become world champions.

The following year, the crew successfully defended their world title in Amsterdam, and then again in Nottingham, winning more gold medals. It was an extraordinary achievement, if barely reported at the time. His last race was the 30-mile Boston Marathon, in which his four-man veteran crew defeated most of the opposition, including younger eight-man crews. He always took a keen interest in BMS rowing, and also took the opportunity to coach several crews.

Mike will be remembered, not only as a world-class sportsman always pursuing the highest standards, but as a committed countryman and a hugely respected friend and mentor to so many. We will miss him more than he could possibly have imagined.'

Obituaries

Raymond 'Ray' Mann 1947-50

West House. Died 23 November 2023.

Jim Denham, Ray's friend, writes: 'Ray was born in Durham though his family roots were in Cwmbran. He spent his childhood in Dudley in the West Midlands. He attended Dudley Grammar School before completing his education at Bedford Modern School after his family moved to Kempston.

He became a student at W H Allen in Bedford after gaining his School Certificate where he qualified to be a mechanical engineer.

He had deferred his national service and then entered the Royal Air Force to complete it.

His working life was mostly spent in sales administration where his people skills and efficiency were much admired.

His passions throughout his life were Queens Rugby Club, classical and jazz music, beer, and conversation.

He served Queens Rugby Club as a player, Treasurer for ten years, Chairman for four years, and President for forty years, totalling more than seventy years.

In a game to celebrate his becoming president of Queens in 1983 he was described in the local press as "one of the greatest servants of rugby in Bedford". He then went on to preside over another forty years of achievement for himself and the club, highlights being the Pilkington Shield win at Twickenham and the club centenary in 2019.

Throughout all the years of club service he proved to be a focal point for players of many generations who found in his company an easy link with games and players of the past but also many convivial evenings of beer and songs. Ray, of course, would lead from the front as he came with a family tradition of singing in public.

Success in life can be measured in many ways but Ray won the admiration and affection of countless people over many generations while serving the club he loved. He will be greatly missed.'

George Cullen Staff 1954-89

Died 17 December 2023.

George's family write: 'George Henry Cullen, was born on the 28 February 1928 in Newark on Trent. His parents were in the Salvation Army. Dad's upbringing was happy and loving, but fairly strict, and gave him his principles and standards that he lived his life by, and that he brought to BMS.

In 1939, aged 11, Dad went to Magnus Grammar School in Newark. It was here that he first excelled at sport. He was very proud that his school record for the hop, skip and jump stood for around 40 years – something he'd comment on whenever the event was on TV. He was an accomplished sprinter and cross-country runner, often coming home with prizes such as a canteen of cutlery, and an armchair.

He played for Newark Rugby and Cricket Clubs whilst still at school, plus a couple of games for Nottingham Rugby Club in his last year at school.

On completing his National Service with the RAF in 1949, Dad was at Loughborough College until 1952. He started to play for Leicester Tigers, making his debut on Boxing Day in 1949.

He went on to become Leicester's leading try scorer in six seasons and the top points scorer of his era – and he never went on the field without a hanky in his pocket. He was a highly regarded fly-half and had an England trial in 1950. Although all the Leicester sports journalists had him in their England team, Dad was picked as a non-travelling reserve.





above and beyond, going every night, whatever the weather, to end the classes and lock up the Sports Hall.

Apart from the sporting successes he had with teams at BMS, one of his highlights was meeting the Queen when she opened the new school at Manton Lane.

We have had so many letters and messages from ex-pupils and ex-colleagues describing Dad as a legend, an icon and formative for so many, letters for which we are extremely grateful, and of which Dad would be so proud and would have loved reading. He had a great memory for ex-pupils, and not just the sporty ones, though that did help.

Ivan Young 1948-57

Perhaps his greatest achievement, was being picked on the wing for Leicestershire and East Midlands against the All Blacks, in 1953, which New Zealand won 3-0. He finished his rugby career at Leicester in 1957 and played one season for Bedford. He was appointed to the Rugby Union's English Schools' Committee, and became President of East Midlands rugby. He was an innovator in his approach to coaching and, with a colleague, produced one of the first handbooks for coaches.

Dad's first teaching appointment was at Windsor Grammar School from 1952-54. From there Dad moved to Bedford Modern School, intending to stay for a couple of years. He stayed for 35. He was Head of Games, taught English, and was Housemaster of County House. He coached the first XV rugby team for 21 years with great success, and won the Rosslyn Park Sevens tournament with his team in 1971.

To do Dad's career at BMS justice in a few lines is impossible. He loved his job, he loved teaching and coaching, but also went

County House. Died 21 December 2023.

Ivan's wife, Carole, writes: 'Ivan started at Bedford Modern School at the age of eight, travelling from his home in Amptill every day. He was part of County House, the highlight of which he remembers as Mrs P J (King)'s super crunchy roast potatoes at lunch on Saturdays when there were home games.

A natural athlete, he excelled as a sprinter and relay runner, was the only scholar entitled to wear all colours on his blazer, represented the school on many occasions, and was proud of the fact that his record for the 100 yards remained unbroken for many years. In the autumn and winter terms, rugby was his game and he played scrum half in the first XV, his best memory being opposite one Dickie Jeeps, who many will remember as the England scrum half for several seasons. Very fit and like "running into a brick wall"!

He also played fives and was a keen shot, regularly competing at Bisley.

Dad retired from BMS in 1989 and, together with Greta, spent the rest of his life devoting his time to his family - his three daughters, Diane, Jenny and Ali, husbands Stewart MacAskill (1963-74), Dick Gray (1964-70), grandchildren Doug (2001-06), Ruairidh (2007-09) and his wife Kirsty, Dan, Lily, Greg, Jessica and Amie, and great-granddaughter, Maisie.

A memorial was held for Dad at Bedford Rugby Club. We were very pleased that four OBMs paid wonderful tributes - Richard Claridge (Student 1953-61, Staff 1967-2000), Geoff Irvine (1954-58), Bruce Mackay (1969-75) and Paul Nash (1973-80).'



He had fond memories of his time at the school, enjoyed his time there, and thoroughly appreciated the opportunities that attending it offered him. His career took him into outdoor advertising as a Regional Manager based in Nottingham, Cheltenham, Bristol and Birmingham.'

Obituaries

Dr John Robert Lloyd

1960-69

North House. Died 02 January 2024.

John's son, John Lloyd, writes: 'John sadly passed away in January this year.

John attended Bedford Modern School from 1960 to 1969 where he commenced his journey in academia and competitive sport. He represented the school in rugby, cricket and athletics.

Following school, John moved to Birmingham where he studied art at the City of Birmingham College in 1969 and undertook a two-year course in painting, printing and sculpture, whilst also training as a teacher (Cert Ed) and going on to complete a BEd degree (University of Birmingham). He achieved a MEd in 1985 and a PhD in 2006 (University of Birmingham).



John became a teacher, working at schools in Birmingham, and then a senior adviser for Birmingham Advisory and Support Service. He was a member of the PSHE Advisory Group and Citizenship Working Party contributing to the development of both the PSHE Framework and statutory Citizenship curriculum in England. Until 2007 he acted as the Policy Adviser for PSHE and Citizenship Education at the Department for Children Schools and Families and until 2012 acted as the Policy Adviser to the PSHE Association.

John was author and co-author of many publications. He was co-author of *Democracy Then and Now*, *Blueprints Health Education* and co-editor of the *Health Promoting Primary School*. He was Adviser to Channel 4 Schools *All About Us* Television series *No Bullying Here* and *Karl's Story* winning the Royal Television Society Gold Award.

John has been a member of the Institute of Health Promotion and Education (IHPE) since 1985 and was President 2013-2014. Whilst being President John drew on his professional background to influence government and policy makers on PSHE and health promotion issues. In 2013, marking the 50th Anniversary of IHPE, he represented the Institute at the Queen's Garden Party, Buckingham Palace. Since stepping down from office he has continued to contribute substantially to IHPE. This included IHPE position papers, British Medical Journal rapid responses and letters, which was recognised in 2018 with the award of Honorary Vice President of IHPE. In 2023 he was presented with the IHPE Diamond Fellow Award for his commitment to the work of the Institute over time and to advancing health promotion and education.

John has also in the past been Chair of the National Safety Education Committee (RoSPA) and a trustee of the University of the First Age (UFA) and Alcohol Education Trust (AET).

John was a talented artist and volunteered at a local centre for artists where he assisted with classes. His work was recognised and exhibited by the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists. He was also dedicated to running,

cycling and swimming. Most significantly, John co-founded Cobra Running and Triathlon Club which he continued to train with and support, including coaching swimming and taking many people through the couch to 5k running programme.

John will be greatly missed by his many friends, colleagues and family including wife Sandra, son John, daughter Katie and grandchildren Miles, Isla, Hester and Reuben. The family would like to thank his fellow Bedford Modern School friends / OBMers for the kind messages and anecdotes received.'

Sally Whitney

2003-05

Oatley House. Died 20 January 2024.

George Whitney, Sally's father, writes: 'Sally lived a short life, but it was full of fun, family, love.... and health issues. Her life consisted of The Good, The Bad and The Beautiful.

The Bad started when my wife Jo and I were called by BMS to carry Sally out of her French A level examination. She knew she was ill but we didn't know why. We spent six years going from hospital to hospital to discover the cause. When she got her diagnosis - Ehlers Danloss plus Lupus and other ailments, she was surprisingly happy. It meant she could start to manage her illness not just suffer it.

She was accepted to do Medicine in Edinburgh but couldn't accept the offer, attended Medical school in Brighton but was thrown out due to her illness, ejected from accommodation by landlords due to her needs, and on many occasions refused financial, medical or personal support. She fought every one of these setbacks. We were astounded by her resilience and strength.

The Bad period eased when she settled into a safe, accessible flat in Brighton. She had friends and PAs around her and an adopted kitten, Piccolo.

A huge change in her life occurred when she was offered Ethan, a black Labrador cross Retriever as a Canine Partner. He gave her a new life, helped her in her daily routine and could foresee oncoming seizures and fetch help. Sally trained Ethan to diamond class level and became a 'Poster Girl' for Canine Partners, throwing herself into supporting the charity. She started to enjoy her life again.

Before I move on to the Beautiful part I want to tell you of the early Good stage.

Born in Bedford, Sally attended a village school, then a grammar school and then joined her brother at Bedford Modern School for her A levels. She was very bright, engaging, wanted to experience life and save the world. She did four A levels, completed the Duke of Edinburgh gold award, helped at a retirement home, spoke Latin with her classics friends, played clarinet and did well at sports, becoming an excellent skier. She went on an ecology expedition in Honduras - learning to scuba dive, holidayed in Cuba - horse riding and swimming with dolphins, and became a competent sailor in a Topper dinghy off the West coast of France. She loved to spend time with her family, and Christmas and birthdays were massively special for her. She loved to celebrate everyone. The traits she developed in these early years carried her through the rest of her life.

Now we get to the Beautiful bit.

By 2015 Sally was using a wheelchair, suffered regular seizures and severe pains... but she still wanted to do more with her life. She created a profile on a Christian dating site and met the lovely Ed. Their love was obvious. Ed understood her suffering, shared her faith in God, loved her unconditionally and encouraged everything she wanted to do. They married in 2017. It was a lovely occasion, the sun shone and she was very happy. Their honeymoon was unique, a cruise to the Norwegian fjords accompanied by her mother and mother-in-law. Needing full-time care had its drawbacks.

For two or three blissful years Sally's health stopped deteriorating, she worked as a researcher with the University of Sheffield, highlighting the plight of disabled people, and researched and co-authored papers, books and theses on the topic. She kept pushing to do more and started working in 'SafeHaven', a women's charity in Brighton, and became a trustee for 'Thru the Roof', a Christian charity supporting disabled access to the faith.

Sally got hit by further major ailments in 2023. Her body could cope no more and she died on 20 January 2024.

Jo and I are very proud to have been the parents of Sally. She gave us such a lot of love and joy and we enjoyed many fun times together. We are grateful to have had her in our lives for 36 wonderful years. We just wish it could have been longer.'



Obituaries

Richard 'Craig' Patrick 1976-85

North House. Died 27 February 2024.



Richard's son, Robert, writes: 'It is with a heavy heart I write about the passing of Richard 'Craig' Patrick who sadly passed away on 27 January 2024, at the age of 56. Craig was born on 17 October 1967 in Liverpool, to Laurie and Patricia Patrick.

Craig attended Bedford Modern School from 1976 to 1985. During this time, Craig developed a passion for music where he was a drummer for the school's orchestra. Craig also played rugby for the school alongside becoming an invaluable oarsmen for the school's rowing team.

Craig was known for being socially outgoing with quick wit and a great sense of humour. He will be fondly remembered for his love and passion for aviation, following the footsteps of his father who flew for the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force. Craig worked in operations for Britannia Airways. During this time, he met Helen in 1995, and his son was born on 21 March 2001.

Craig would regularly watch football, Formula 1, rugby, and cricket. Craig's passion for music continued into adulthood as he developed an extensive collection of both vinyl and CDs of albums and singles from his favourite artists ranging from: Dido,

David Gray, Simple Minds, Fleetwood Mac, The Verve, Berlin and The Lighthouse Family. This was the same for his love of films where he was a keen collector of films on cassette tapes and DVDs, particularly from the 1980s such as: *Top Gun*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Cocktail*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Beverly Hill Cops*, *Die Hard*, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

Craig is survived by his son, Robert, and his sister, Vanessa. Craig's legacy with his humour, love for sports, music, and films will live on and be passed down through generations by his surviving relatives, loved ones, and friends.

A religious service at St. Michael's church, Mytholmroyd, and a committal service at Park Wood Crematorium, Elland, took place on 20 March 2024. He will be reunited and interned with his parents.

Craig suffered severely with numerous heart conditions. In 2010, he underwent a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft at Harefield Hospital. So, in light of Craig's suffering from Hypertensive and Ischaemic heart disease and at his family's wishes, there was a donation box at the funeral for The British Heart Foundation, raising £287.10.

Craig had many mantras and quotes, and he will be fondly remembered for his use of Latin quotes:

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day), Tempus Fugit, Memento Mori (Time is fleeting, remember death), Cogito, Ergo Sum (I think, therefore I am) and Vini, Vedi, Vici (I came, I saw, I conquered).

In light of his love for Latin quotes and on behalf of Craig's family, loved ones, and friends...

Finis Vitae Sed Non Amoris – The end of life, but not of love.

Rest in Peace, Craig.

The Patrick family.'

Frederic 'Freddie' Haas 1941-44

School House. Died 24 March 2024.

Freddie Haas was born on 30 March 1926 in Aachen, the only child of Johanna and Ludwig Haas. At the age of eight his parents were forced to move him from his Montessori school when it was apparent that Jewish children were no longer welcome. Two years later Freddie and his family fled Germany under the growing shadow of the Nazis.

From Holland the family obtained residency in Belgium from where Freddie's father secured emigration visas to Chile. By the time the visas came WWII had broken out and the family booked their passage on the SS Simon Bolivar bound for Santiago via the Panama Canal. They sailed from Amsterdam on 17 November 1939. The following day Freddie was roaming the ship when there was a powerful explosion caused by a torpedo or mine. He was given a lifejacket and put into a lifeboat. A second explosion caused the lifeboat to drop from a height and threw Freddie into the North Sea. He swam until he was picked up by HMS Warwick, covered in black engine oil. He was landed in Harwich where, after some time, he was reunited with his father. His mother and grandmother were lost, believed drowned.

Without a mother to look after him, 13-year-old Freddie was sent to boarding school in Canterbury and later to Bedford Modern School. He learned English and at Bedford he had a somewhat brutal introduction to Marmite (which he spread like jam the first time to the merriment of fellow pupils) and cricket. He looked back on his days at Bedford with affection and gratitude.

After leaving school Freddie started to demonstrate ability and flair in both scientific and practical fields. He worked hard by day and studied diligently at night. He gained a

BSc at the now University of Westminster, worked in Manchester, and later London at the merchanting house of Lowenstein & Hecht where he became expert in the glass trade. His spoken French was fluent and he was sent to France with authority to place orders from glass factories at the early age of 22. He invested £4 – two weeks' wages – on a second-hand bicycle which he carefully maintained for almost 70 years.

In 1950 Freddie joined Mewburn Ellis, a Patent Agency in Chancery Lane where he rose steadily from pupil to equity partner. He was able not only in the technical side of the profession but also assisting in the business side of the firm. While there he managed to train and qualify as a solicitor by doing his law degree in the evenings through UCL, and after retiring from Mewburn Ellis after 30 years, he started a second career as a solicitor specialising in wills and conveyancing for family and friends.

In 1948 Freddie met Margot, then aged 16, who was, in his words, the love of his life. They married in 1955 and had three daughters, Joanna, Carol and Paula.

Freddie and Margot enjoyed a large circle of friends, many of whom shared similar backgrounds. Freddie was a keen Rotarian,

helping a variety of deserving causes well into his 90's. He rode the London to Brighton cycle ride several times raising funds for the British Heart Foundation, always in his trademark tweeds and tie, trilby hat taped on so that it would not fly off. Lycra was not his style!

When Margot suffered ill health in later life, Freddie cared for her with devotion. Somewhat to his surprise, he embraced the joys of being grandpa to seven grandchildren, and later still, he took huge pleasure in his nine great grandchildren. Having experienced a disrupted childhood as an only child, the shadow of Nazism and the traumatic loss of his mother and grandmother, seeing his growing and stable family committed to Jewish community and values visibly gave him pleasure.

Freddie was very well loved and deeply respected. His life was the story of triumph over adversity, achievement in his profession and conspicuous ability in all he did. He will be greatly missed.

Obituary based on information supplied by Frederick's daughters.

BMS are grateful to Frederic Haas for his generous legacy donation to the school.



Reginald Stock

1945-50

County House. Died 29 March 2024.



One of four brothers born and bred in Harrold, Flight Lieutenant Reg Stock sadly passed away in Preston at Easter 2024 aged 90. Reg is survived by his two younger brothers, Edgar and Ernie.

Born in 1933, Reg soon became a key part of Harrold, being crowned the May Queen in 1938! His mother, Mrs Emily Stock, otherwise known as Mrs Harrold, accompanied Reg dressed as a farm yokel.

Both Mrs Stock and Reggie were the organists at the Chapel for over 20 years.

Reg was educated at Bedford Modern School, along with his brothers Frank and Edgar. He joined the RAF in 1951, initially as a service pilot. He was then posted to Germany, flying Vampire and Venom aircraft.

In 1963, Reg was deployed to Venezuela. On his return, he worked out of the Luton division and was heavily involved in high rotation spinning and anti-spin parachute trials. He became the chief test pilot for both Strikemaster and Provost, flying at the Farnborough Air Shows in the 1960s and the Paris Salon in 1969, 1971 and 1977.

He trained the young Prince Charles to fly and was the Chief Military Test Pilot to the British Aircraft Corporation.

Obituaries

In 1973 Reg was deployed to Ecuador to test rebuilt aircraft and train Ecuadorian pilots.

He was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air in the 1981 Birthday Honours List.

On retirement, Reg spent his time in Preston, indulging in his passion for gardening and music. He will be fondly remembered by all who were privileged to know him and will be missed by family and friends.

Terry Nash

1944-47

County House. Died 30 March 2024.

Terry's son, Paul Nash (1973-80), writes: 'I write to report the death of my father, Terry Nash, who died on Saturday 30 March 2024 in Beacon House Nursing Home, Bedford at the ripe old age of 90. He was at BMS from 1944 to 1947 having joined at age eleven and having left at age fourteen, as you could in those days. It was he who, along with older BMS boys who lived near us in Falcon Avenue, Bedford, inspired me to want to be schooled at The School of the Black and Red and hence I joined in 1973.

Born and raised in Stewartby, Terry was awarded a free place at BMS and spent three very happy years there. Both he and I shared one master, John Hamilton Greenwood who taught both of us woodwork. My father was a keen sportsman and competed for the school at cricket and athletics. He was far better than me at the distance events and actually loved the annual steeplechase event, something I was, in the words of George Cullen, "not too keen" on.

On leaving BMS my father joined The London Brick Company (LBC) in their offices in Stewartby. After a short spell with LBC he moved to The Zurich Insurance Company on Goldington Road in Bedford. He rose up the



ranks within the company and retired from there aged 59 as Chief Claims Superintendent.

The photograph, in which my father proudly sports his OBM bow tie, was taken in December 2022 before my elder daughter's wedding. He was very proud of his family and his BMS education, something I have most definitely inherited.

When hope is young.....'

Greta Cullen

Wife of George Cullen

Staff 1980s

Died 02 April 2024.

Greta's family write: 'Greta Christina Mary Mills was born in Loughborough on 20 April 1931.

Mum met Dad, George Cullen (1954-89), at a pharmacy in Loughborough when he went in to buy toothpaste and he asked her out.



Their courtship lasted five years before they married on 01 August 1955, a loving marriage that lasted over 68 years. They were soulmates who complemented each other perfectly.

After their wedding, Mum worked at a pharmacist in Bedford, before Dad was appointed House Master of Bedford Modern School's County House, and Mum took on the role of running the domestic side of the House. 180 boys would go there every day for lunch.

There was a staff of cook, kitchen assistants and cleaners, all roles that Mum took on whenever there were any absences. The longest of these was when the cook was hospitalised for several weeks, and Mum took on the cooking duties, without any complaint, and at the same time as looking after a young family.

I have been told by old boys of the school that when Mum and Dad took over, it was like a breath of fresh air and the older boys, in particular, looked forward to racing there from school to have their lunches served by Mum. She was especially famous for her chips.

After they left County House, Mum became the Modern School Clothing Shop manager, working alongside her great friend Christine Halstead.

The shop started small in what was little more than a cupboard under the stairs, but Mum developed it until it first moved to what used to be the armoury, by the swimming pool, now changing rooms. Eventually they moved to comparatively palatial accommodation at the school, with a little staff room where Mum and Christine could sit down, have a cup of tea and put the world to rights – and discuss the gossip that members of staff would impart.

Mum's main job throughout her marriage was looking after her family. She never put herself first and our lives were full of fun, laughter and happy memories of County House and Caves Lane.'

Archibald 'Archie' Whitby

1942-50

County House. Died 20 April 2024.

Archie's son, Kevin Simm writes: 'Archie was born at Potton, near Hatley Saint George in the house above his maternal grandfather's grocery business.

An only child of Frank and Amy Whitby he moved about from Whittington Barracks, Lichfield where his Warrant Officer Dad was a serving soldier (who had seen action at the Somme, Passchendaele and Ypres) to Aldershot. The family had been Anglican but became Methodists.

At the end of World War II, Frank retired from military service and the family moved into Harrowden Road, Bedford. Archie secured a place at Bedford Modern School and made lifelong friends there and at Harrowden Methodist Church.



He spent much of his national service at Badenhäusen, Germany as part of the British Army of The Rhine, enjoying amateur dramatics there and he also became a confirmed Anglican. On his return however he felt at home in Methodism.

He worked for one year in insurance but then applied to, and was accepted for, an arts degree course at Bede College, Durham University.

He played rugby for the college and on graduation in June 1956 embarked on a teacher training course specializing in English and Religious Education, and in Hebrew studies in the 2nd year. He was a member of the Student Christian Movement and in 1957 qualified as a Methodist local preacher.

He worked at Sutton Coldfield, then Birmingham grammar schools and on marriage in 1958 bought a house in Sutton Coldfield. Later he and his first wife Doreen, whom he had met while both were Durham students, made their home and started their family in Sunderland where Doreen's family lived. Their two sons Kevin and Nigel spent happy weeks every summer holiday at Bedford. Meanwhile Archie taught mainly English in Secondary and Further Education returning to Bedford on the break-up of the marriage to work at Peterborough and he continued as a local preacher for over 60 years of service to the Methodist Church.

He married Glenys in 1986 and they stayed married at Harrowden Road until her death in 2022.'

Obituaries

Col John Austin Robinson (Robbie)

1936-42 | OBM Club president 2000



County House. Died 21 April 2024.

John's son, Paul Robinson, writes: John Austin Robinson (Robbie) was born on 11 May 1924 in Harrold, Bedfordshire. It was the 'roaring 20's, which was soon to be met with the Great Depression and WWII. Who knew that this young boy would go on to have a prestigious military career and would play his part in that war too.

His school days were spent at Bedford Modern School. His ability to lead was evident even from this point as he became school monitor. Robbie continued to support the school throughout his adulthood and in the year 2000 he was elected President of the OBM Club.

In 1942, he went to the esteemed Trinity College, Cambridge. However, his studies were cut short as he was called to war in 1944, and following his officer training was commissioned into the Indian Army. He served in the Madras Sappers & Miners. Robbie didn't just serve, he led with courage and distinction earning the respect of his comrades and superiors alike.

Robbie's love for sports never waned. Whether it was rugby, cricket, tennis, or golf, he approached each game with fervour and determination.

Before leaving the UK for India, he became engaged to Betty Tucker, who was known as Kelly. The couple met on the school bus years before when they were 14 years old. They married in 1947. They were married for 66 years until Kelly's passing in 2013. They were blessed with the birth of their son Paul in 1950, followed 3 years later by Andrew.

In 1947, Robbie transferred to the British Army, commissioned into The Royal Engineers. He was able to continue his studies at London University and graduated from there in August 1951.

As a father, Paul remembers him being a stern disciplinarian. He instilled in his boys the values of honour, integrity and resilience that defined his own life, and there was always lots of laughter.

In later years he would advocate for the less able and would often be the voice of the vulnerable. As a case worker for SSAFA and The British Legion after his retirement he worked tirelessly to support veterans and their families.

As he continued his career in the army, it took him to far reaching destinations. Whilst in Northern Ireland he worked on The Silent Valley Dam. He also designed and built The Nami Bridge in Northern Malaya. And at the end of his military life, he worked for the War Office.

Meanwhile, Paul and Andrew were growing up and starting their own families. Robbie became a grandfather to five and great grandfather to six. He was proud of all of his family.

In 1979, Robbie retired from the army and went to work as Chief Engineer for Reed Construction. One of the projects he led on was building bomb proof aircraft hangers in the Middle East. He continued to demonstrate his expertise and commitment to ensuring safety and security in the most challenging of environments.

He retired once more in 1982 and settled into village life in Bedfordshire. Never one to take life easy, Robbie became a very active member of the community. He fought long and hard to get war disability pensions for veterans, he became a member of the parish council and would also enjoy propping up the bar in the local pub.

Robbie enjoyed holidays with the family and the finer things in life. He continued to play golf well into his 80's and would love watching sport on Sky.

When the pandemic hit the UK in 2020, Robbie was living in Chatham and clearly considered to be vulnerable. Although he was in assisted living, he was very reliant on the help and support provided by Sarah, a friend and companion of many years.

As his health deteriorated, the decision was made for him to leave Chatham in 2023 and be looked after at The Cedars, which was near to Paul and Joy.

His commitment to service will be remembered with gratitude and admiration. Colonel John Robinson leaves behind a legacy of strength, resilience and a deep-rooted commitment to his principles. May he rest in peace knowing that his contributions have made the world a better place.'

John ‘Russell’ Fitt

1940-45

East House. Died 01 May 2024.

Russell’s daughter, Susan Fitt Heath, writes: ‘I am saddened to report the death of my father John Russell Fitt (Russ).

Russell was born on 15 October 1929 in Droxford, a beautiful village in the Meon Valley in Hampshire. In 1939 the family moved to Bedford, and Russell and his brother Arthur (1944-1949) both attended BMS. Russell left school in 1945 after taking the school certificate at the age of 16. After National Service he pursued a career in sales, firstly with Unilever (Batchelors Foods) followed by G Plan furniture where he was National Sales Manager for 25 years before retiring in 1991.

He was married to Anne, née Parkinson, an ex-student at The Bedford PE College, who predeceased him in 1991. Anne and Russ had 2 daughters, Susan and Lesley.

A keen sportsman all his life, he described himself as a person whose enthusiasm went somehow to compensate for his lack of skill.



He played rugby for Bedford Athletic for 12 years before moving away from Bedford, when he joined Barnet Rugby Club where he played for eight years and then in his twilight years for three seasons for High Wycombe. At school he played for the 2nd XV and was in the 1st Cross Country pack. He played golf

after the end of his rugby career and although no great shakes at the game he was captain of his club, Flackwell Heath in 1980, and President in 1995 and 1996.

He passed away peacefully at home in Buckinghamshire age 94 years on 01 May 2024.’

Richard Bushby

1953-62

County House. Died 08 May 2024.

Richard’s brother, David, writes the following based on Richard’s own words: ‘Richard entered BMS in the Junior School and after two trouble-free years entered main school, where he soon found himself in hot water. He claims that he came perilously close to being expelled from BMS because of his stubborn refusal to engage with Latin lessons; something that really offended the then Head (JET’ Taylor). However, because he showed some promise in Science and Maths, there was a stay of execution. As a result he received a very sound foundation in Science under ‘HANK’ Tanner (Chemistry), ‘PJ’ King (Physics) and ‘KILLER’ Heath (Biology).

A first-class degree in Chemistry, at Imperial College, London, was followed by a doctorate at Oxford (Balliol College), a one-year teaching fellowship at Queen Mary College, London and a one-year NATO research fellowship at Yale. This was a particularly interesting time to be in New Haven with the Black Panther Trial and riots, the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam war all part of the ‘backdrop’.



He was appointed as a lecturer in Organic Chemistry at the University of Leeds in 1970. In 1998 he was awarded the prestigious Josef Loschmidt prize, one of only eleven people to have received it to date. He became Professor of Physical Organic Chemistry, before leaving Chemistry to help set up a new multi-disciplinary Research Centre. After a period as Head of that Centre, he took early ‘retirement’, moving Department once again, this time to Molecular and Nanoscale Physics.

Obituaries

Retirement was purely nominal and he continued to run research projects, publish and also to work at the bench for three days a week, up until Feb 2024. He was involved in a wide range of different research projects but most were concerned with liquid crystals, model biological membranes and organic materials with novel magnetic properties. Here, to quote from the Leeds University obituary, 'He rapidly established an international reputation.'

Outside of work he was a Methodist Lay Preacher for fifty years and had a deep love of all aspects of Natural History as well as tending his garden, allotment, and bees.

He married Maureen Seager (for many years a music teacher at Harrogate Ladies College). His son (Paul) is a professor of Mathematics at the University of Newcastle. His daughter (Katherine Wright) is an engineer at Rolls Royce Derby and there are four grandchildren.

In February he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died only a few weeks later. He had grants that would have enabled him to continue his research until 2026, but this was not to be.'

Dr Paul Paviour 1940-48

South House. Died 24 May 2024.

Paul's son, Adrian, writes: 'Paul was born in April 1931 in Birmingham, the son of Hereward Paviour (also an old boy of the school, and well-known rower) and Constance Cameron, and grandson of Harry James Paviour, a tailor and noted preacher in Bedford. Paul's family returned to Bedford shortly after his birth and he stayed in Bedford until 1965.

Paul, by his own admission, was not a leading student, but developed a passion for music in which he started to excel. The



evacuation to Bedford of much of the BBC music structure during the war, and the subsequent recorded concerts performed in Bedford, fed this passion. Paul was exposed to many leading musicians and conductors through these concerts.

Paul joined a committee attempting to set up an annual music festival in the city and he wrote to several leading conductors and composers to get them involved. The Headmaster eventually found out and put a stop to it, but the zeal for organising concerts and choirs had been sown and there was no stopping it.

Paul recalled the time when the Luftwaffe passed over and dropped a few bombs, one landing in the school grounds. The boys ran towards the bomb site rather than to a safer spot.

Paul completed his National Service in the Royal Marines, ending up on the UK Naval Flag Ship Indomitable. There was a chance

after all the hard training, that he would be posted to the Korean Peninsula before his demob, but the Marines fortunately chose to send him home.

Paul's father arranged an interview for him for a banking position, a very prestigious profession in those days. During the rail journey he shared a cabin with a gentleman who was a mover in educational circles and who suggested he apply for a teaching job in music. He did, and that was that.

He was involved with school, church and other choirs from the moment he left school and completed his National Service. There may be a few people left in Bedford who might remember those choirs, one being the successful Elizabethan Singers.

Paul studied for Bachelors and Masters degrees at London's Royal School of Music, was appointed a Fellow, and won the prestigious Harding prize for composition.

Paul met his wife Margaret Muncaster through choirs and music competitions during his National Service. She did not fall for him immediately, but he kept at it, somewhat successfully, as they were together for over 63 years. They had three sons, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Margaret died in 2017.

In early 1970, after a few years in Wakefield they took the huge step to emigrate to Bathurst, Australia with their three young sons, where Paul got a job at All Saints College. His first year required him to write and direct the music for the school's Bicentenary epic, *Vision 70*, performed on a half-sized replica of the Endeavour, as well as to whip the Cathedral choir into shape for the dedication of the new Bathurst Anglican Cathedral in 1971.

His life was dedicated to music. Teaching, Composition, Choirs, Operas, Theatre shows, even movie soundtracks. Among many musical highlights, he conducted mass choirs on television in the UK, was Musical Director for the opening of the new Australian Parliament House in Canberra in 1988 and was awarded the Order of Australia in 2003 for services in music.

The family moved to Goulburn, New South Wales in 1975 when Paul got a job lecturing in music at the Goulburn College of Advanced Education. He was also organist and choir master at the Goulburn Anglican Cathedral and founding director of the Goulburn Conservatorium of Music, retiring only in 2015. He also completed a Doctorate of Music at Sydney University.

On two occasions he performed for Queen Elizabeth II, and took the Goulburn Consort of Voices to Rome to perform for John-Paul II as part of a European tour.

Paul wrote more than 200 compositions, including major symphonies, state works, concertos and orchestral works.

He died peacefully on 24 May 2024 at his home in Goulburn, Australia.'

Herbert 'Norman' Daniels

1934-40

South House. Died 19 June 2024.

Herbert's son, Paul, writes: 'Herbert Norman Daniels (known as Norman) was born 25 February 1924 in St. Neots, Cambridgeshire. He grew up in Bedford, the eldest to sister Margaret and brother John. He went to Bedford Modern School where his best subject was maths although he enjoyed his other subjects and also playing rugby.

At 16 he was articled to his uncle's chartered accountancy firm in King's Lynn. It was here he met a young girl called June Bailey at the local Methodist church. War intervened and Norman joined the RAF. He couldn't fly as he wore glasses so he became an instrument repairer. After training he was posted to India working on Hurricane fighters. A story he would often tell was of 'blowing in the pitot' to test the instrument was working! Later there were Wellington bombers, Mosquitos and of course the Spitfires. He retained a love of aircraft all his life.

Norman came home in September 1946 and returned to King's Lynn to his Uncle's firm and the Methodist church and he also started playing rugby again. He moved to Cambridge where he became a youth club leader and played rugby for Cambridge Town. It was here he met up with June Bailey again who was nursing in Addenbrookes Hospital. Norman and June married in 1952 and their first daughter Frances was born in 1953. Norman passed his final exams to become a chartered accountant and got a job with Cascelloid of Leicester and later moved to Brevitt shoes. Norman and June settled in Thurcaston in 1955 where Paul, Elizabeth and Catherine were born. They were members of the Methodist Chapel, Norman ran the senior Sunday school class and started the Boys Brigade battalion.

Having given up playing rugby, Norman took to watching Leicester Tigers at Welford Road where he went until he was in his 80's.

Norman and June moved to Anstey in 1964 and joined the Anstey Methodist Church. He became a youth club leader and a Boy's Brigade leader, where he took groups of children to MAYC weekends and Boy's Brigade camps. He became a local preacher and took on roles of church treasurer and bible study leader. Early holidays were camping with the children digging sandcastles, rock pooling and playing French cricket. He loved history and these trips always involved visits to castles and churches. Later June and Norman went travelling to visit family in Canada and America, and then to Israel, New Zealand and many other places. He enjoyed DIY and made toys for the children. He loved his books and could find a book on any subject to help with homework. He also had a long-lasting love of gardening, especially roses which he passed on to his children and grandchildren. Each of his children had three children of their own, so Norman has 12 grandchildren, and they in turn have gone on to have children, so there are nine great grandchildren and one on the way. Norman recently celebrated his 100th birthday with his family.'



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