THE OLD
Wellingburian
NEWSLETTER
Trinity 2025 The Old Wellingburian Club Est. 1897

Headmaster's Farewell





It does feel somewhat odd to be reminiscing about my time at Wellingborough. For a start, I'm not prone to nostalgia at the best of times and, second, the nature of Headship is such that I'm pretty sure I will be 'on it' until 11:59pm on 31st August and so there is precious little time to look back. Nevertheless, I shall give it a go.

Classical scholars will be aware of the paradox of the Ship of Theseus; fans of 1980s TV may be more comfortable with the concept of Trigger's broom. In either case, the question is the same: to what extent is Wellingborough School still the school that I inherited in January 2018? At first glance, much has changed, as will always be the case in schools. For starters, well over half of the children here now were not here seven years ago. For me, students are the School, and so having 600-ish different ones from when I arrived fundamentally changes the nature of the School. They have different ambitions, different needs, and different views; we, as a school, respond to those differently in order to support them as well as we can, and ensure they develop happily and successfully. Similarly, I've appointed over half of the staff. Their qualities are different from their predecessors, and their appointment is designed to meet the School's objectives as they stand now, not ten years ago.

But that's not really at the heart of the matter, is it? The core of the School hasn't changed very much at all, in my view; it's mainly a case of adopting new approaches to achieve the same underlying aims that remain important to us. We still want the children to leave here as contented, aspiring, confident young people – and they certainly do. What I think has changed in my time – whether or not I've influenced it or been responsible for it – is two-fold.

First, I genuinely believe that the School is now rightly proud of itself in a way that I don't think was evident in 2018. Please be assured that I've factored out modesty and self-effacement from that evaluation, and am really only commenting on what our community really thinks about its school. I was certainly frustrated at the start of my tenure by the number of times that staff or parents referred to other independent schools as better, when in most cases what they thought was demonstrably untrue. I'd like to think that I have helped the School to celebrate itself, and take credit where it's due. It is somewhat ironic that we hope to instil the characteristic of quiet confidence in our students, without reflecting on whether the School itself possesses that trait.

Second, and I accept that some will wish this wasn't the case, I think the School now recognises that it is capable of change, and that change is not a dirty word. As I've already suggested, we're here to serve the students, and very rarely is that effectively undertaken by thinking "but we've always done it like this." I also think that the School has surprised itself (which feeds into my earlier point) at how successfully it can adopt new approaches and new outlooks. It is now a much more agile beast than a few years ago, at a time when such an attribute could hardly be more important.

In my time at Wellingborough, we have enjoyed our two most successful external Inspections, the latter of which threw the School's reputation for an excellent co-curriculum into the spotlight. Readers may be interested to know that the last three HMC schools to be awarded a Significant Strength for their Co-Curriculum are us, St Paul's in London, and Eton College. Returning again to an earlier point, isn't that something to be proud about, that Wellingborough is in the same league as the purported strongest and most famous schools in the country.

Our academic programme has never been better, and the outcomes for students are in the stratosphere. At the risk of being hoist by my own petard, but it would not surprise me to see our A level results this summer being a Wellingborough record. Imagine what that means for the students, what it enables them to go on and do.

We are still ahead of the game in terms of our pastoral provision, but we have become far better at uniting that with all aspects of a child's school life. Our Learning Development capability means that all children here are treated as individuals and don't have to fit into a certain-shaped curriculum that might not suit them.

And then there's the building. The Sixth Form Centre has been a massive success, probably even above what we'd hoped. If the near-ready Technology Centre is only half as successful, it will transform what the students are enabled to do, and it will be another symbol of the bold intent of Wellingborough School as forward-thinking, progressive establishment.

Wellingborough, just like pretty much all independent schools in the UK, is facing bigger challenges than just about anything it's faced in living memory – and I include within that Covid, the financial crash at the back end of the first decade of this century, and even the loss of Government Assisted Places in the 1990s. But it could hardly be better placed to withstand those challenges, in part because it delivers a superb product, and people will always want that. I will miss so much of Wellingborough, both in terms of the people here but also what the School is and represents. I wish my successor, Simon Hawkes, every success, and also hope that he becomes similarly affected (or should that be 'infected'?!) by Wellingborough's charm.













Upcoming OW Events

If you would like to attend any of the events listed below, please contact Katie at kpo@wellingboroughschool.org

Business Networking

Thursday 12th June 2025

Join us from 6pm at the showroom of Matthew Oliver Windows and Doors for our next Business Networking Event. Open to OWs, parents, and the wider School community, this is a great opportunity to network with a wide range of people. Drinks and nibbles provided.
Thank you to current parent, Matthew Oliver, for kindly hosting this event.

House Reunions / OW v the School Cricket & Hockey

Friday 20th June 2025

Join us from 5-6pm for drinks on the Headmaster's Lawn before current Housemasters and Housemistresses take you on a tour to see the Houses as they are now. Afterwards, head down to watch the sport and enjoy a BBQ dinner at the Thatched Pavilion.
We still have places available in the OW Cricket team. If you are interested in playing, please contact brb@wellingboroughschool.org

OW Summer Lunch

Saturday 28th June 2025

We are hosting an OW Lunch at the School from midday, including welcome drinks and lunch.
During the afternoon we will open up some buildings for viewing, and will also present a display from the archives.
Headmaster Andrew Holman will be reflecting on his time at the School in what will be his final OW event before he moves schools in the summer.
Tickets are priced at £25pp, partners welcome.



Wellingborough Senior School Parents' Association has pleasure in inviting you to attend this year's Summer Ball. As in previous years, this very popular function will take place at the School and is open to parents across the whole school, former parents, OWs, staff, governors, friends, family and Year 13 leavers.

Click here to purchase your ticket. The deadline for ticket sales is Tuesday 10th June.

Class of 2020 5-year Reunion

Saturday 13th September 2025

Welcome back to the class of 2020!
Members of the Class of 2020 are invited back to the School for drinks and a BBQ whilst reminiscing with peers and former teachers.

Benefactors Event

Friday 19th September 2025

Donors and legators are invited for dinks and nibbles in the newly opened Technology Centre.

OW Autumn Lunch & AGM

Saturday 8th November 2025

You are invited to join us for the annual OW Autumn Lunch held at the School. Join us for welcome drinks before enjoying a three course meal delivered by the School's catering team. Tickets to go on sale in early Autumn.

Rememberance Service

Sunday 9th November 2025

The School welcomes back OWs to attend the service of remembrance in the School's chapel alongside current pupils and staff. Light refreshments will be served in the dining hall after the service.

Past Events

CCF Dinner

Old Wellingburians who have served or are serving with the Armed Forces were invited to attend the School's annual Combined Cadet Force's Dinner on Friday 7th March 2025. Roger Morton (82-87, P), Philip Warr (96-01, PS), and James McNicholas (81-88, G) were all in attendance alongside current students and staff.

James McNicholas wrote of the event. "OWs who enjoyed CCF at school might be interested to hear about the recent OW CCF Annual Dinner, which was held on Friday 7th March in the Spencer Room. A great evening, which offered the opportunity to meet old friends, hear from current cadets and instructors, and support the school and the contingent. Good food, good cheer, and an inspirational address from a highly distinguished veteran.

Much has changed in the 42 years since I joined WS CCF in 1983, but not everything. Ranges, including the stew, and exercises on the Yardley Chase Training Area both still feature and are probably not different. I got a reassuring sense of continuity.

It is a strange thought that 42 years before that, in 1941, WS OTC cadets might have been contemplating military service in much harder times. We cannot know what awaits this generation, but the CCF makes sure that for its members, the Armed Forces are at least familiar. That's got to be worth supporting."

If you have served or are serving in the Armed Forces and did not receive an invite to this event, please get in touch so we can ensure that you are invited in 2026.

The Oxford and Cambridge Dinner

A wonderful evening was had by all who joined our host, Sir Christopher Greenwood (65-73, C) and his wife Sue, at the annual Oxford and Cambridge dinner at Magdalene College, Cambridge on Friday 7th March 2025.
Discussions over drinks flowed in the Master's Lodge, and continued over a fantastic dinner provided by the catering team at the College.






London Dinner

This year's OW London Dinner was held at the National Liberal Club, Westminster - a venue which dates back to 1887 and was founded by former Prime Minister, William Gladstone.
OWs and their partners travelled from all across the country to attend, with one guest travelling from Mallorca, Spain. Old Wellingburians spanned the school years from 1955 to the present day.
Over 50 OWs, staff, Heads of School and guests reconnected over a drink in the 'smoking room' before moving to the David Lloyd George Room for an excellent three-course dinner. Emily-May Palmer (13-22, N) said grace, Julian Amey (57-67,G) shared an update from the Committee since the last dinner, and Heads of School, Henry and Zara, provided highlights from their final year at Wellingborough School.








OW Winter Sports

The OWs narrowly came out ahead of the School at the annual OWs vs School Netball and Football Matches. The weather was perfect (compared to last year) and the standard of play excellent as keenly contested matches returned the following results:

OW Netball V 1st Netball 30-30
OW Football A V 1st Football 2-2
OW Football B V 2nd Football 6-1

A huge thank you to the over 30 OWs who joined us this year, the pupils, staff and supporters as well as our wonderful catering and ground staff.







Northampton Saints

A new event this year was an invitation to OWs to join Graham (Foundation and Development Director) and Lester (Master in charge of rugby and Garne's HM) at the final home game where Saints welcomed Saracens to Franklin Gardens on Saturday 17th May 2025.

Jerry and Mark Higgins, Peter Horrell, George Paton and Harriet Timms joined Graham and Lester at what turned out to be a win for Saints in the last passage of play to cap a fantastic day which started with lunch at Club's Heroes restaurant.

We plan to make this an annual event in the OW calendar so please do join us if you can in the new season.





The Old Wellingburian Golfing Society



The OW Golf Society's first event of the year was the annual Halford Hewitt competition held at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club on the 10th April 2025. The Halford Hewitt is one of Britain's most competitive golf tournaments, contested between teams of 10 former pupils from the 64 schools which make up the membership of the Public Schools Golfing Society.

The Old Wellingburian team was made up of, Aemish Taylor (96-01, P), Luke McGuire (01-05, PS), Jordan McGuire (01-06, PS), Ollie Timm (07-14, G), Sam McGuire (03-10, PS), Richard Jackson (70-81, PS), Andy Billson (80-83, F), Philip Saxby (78-82, JS), Alan Harlow (75-81, PS) and captained by Chris Billson (71-81,C).

The team were drawn against Cheltenham in the 1st round who have had a strong record in the last few years. It was a late start at Royal Cinque Port in fair but breezy conditions. Wellingborough can be proud to have taken this match to the last hole in the last game providing excellent drama, but sadly the wrong result losing 3 matches to 2.

This was followed with a further loss in the Plate Competition the next day to Eton, losing 3 games to nil.

The Old Wellingburian Golfing Society - Spring Meeting Report

The Spring meeting was held at Wellingborough Golf Club, our spiritual home on Thursday 5th June.

An excellent turnout of 20 golfers from all age groups; recent leavers to our evergreen 81-year-old President, John Panter. We were so pleased to welcome several first timers who thoroughly enjoyed the day in a most relaxed atmosphere, Richard Smith, Steve Oakenfull, Tom Blason and Toby Mitchell to name a few.

The competition was fierce as should be expected from Wellingborough Schools finest sporting competitors!

The Gillitt Vase was the prize, keenly fought over by golfers of all ages and standards in the best of spirit.

Longest drive was taken by Philip Saxby and nearest the pin went to Toby Mitchell, 10 feet away on the tough 11th hole into a testing wind.

The final scores for the Gillitt Vase were impressive, with several over 30 points. Will Chudley finished 3rd with a most credible 36 points in wet and windy conditions, our President John Panter was 2nd on 37 points (holing everything with a borrowed putter as he left his at home!), only pipped on count back by the most accomplished Jordan McGuire who had a most impressive back nine to secure the trophy.

Our Autumn meeting is on the 11th September at Northampton County where we will compete for the OW Cup and we welcome all golfers along. Toby Hemsley is organising the day. The best combined scores from the Spring meeting and Autumn meeting challenge for the fabulous Wright Cup, a truly impressive piece of silverware.







OW Visits to the School

The Foundation team are always pleased to welcome back Old Wellingburians to the School. Please do get in touch with Katie or Graham if you would like to visit.



Keir Mulcahey (12-17, C) visited the School in March to deliver a talk to Year 8 students. Keir, a historical re-enactor, dressed as a Roman soldier to deliver a talk on Roman history.



Foundation Director, Graham, met with Sarah Jo Milan (88-92, M) and Zoe Gardiner-Wood (88-92, M) at the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens in London.



Chris Porter (72-77, P) visited the School with his 2 daughters in May. Chris and his family were holidaying in the UK from their home of Hawaii, USA. During the visit Chris was able to see his dorm, which is now a classroom.



Tawana Muchatuta (02-04, P) visited the School in June whilst travelling in the UK from his home in Zimbabwe. Tawana, a chemical engineer, also took the time to speak to current students about careers in Chemistry. During the visit Tawana was also reunited with fellow 04 leaver and the School's Head of Phycology, Hilary Arimoro (90-04, W).

OW Reunions





OWs Steve Williams (46-56, G) and Peter Clementson (51-46, G) recently reunited on a cruise across North and Central America.
Steve said of the excursion, "I have lived outside the UK since 1963, but have maintained contact with Peter periodically during visits to the UK, also in the Netherlands while I lived there.
In October last Peter contacted me to say that he and his wife Janey had booked a Cunard cruise from Southampton to Sydney via the USA; would I and my partner Barbara care to join them for all or a part of such trip. This we did for some fourteen days from New York to San Francisco via the Panama canal and, besides Miami, ports of call in Columbia, Guatemala and Mexico.
As you would expect, this provided a fine opportunity to reminisce on our years together at Wellingborough and our varied careers since our Wellingborough days."
Peter added, "We are now 87 years old, born one day apart, are reasonably fit and well. We send our best wishes to any of our contemporaries who can still read. We hope all is well at Wellingborough and regret that we both live too far away to come to OW Events. Our loss!"

OW News

OW awarded for their endeavors in surgery



This year's annual Cutler Prize, open to all 25,000 Surgeons in the UK across all specialties, has been awarded to Dr Ankur Khajuria (04-09, C) for his groundbreaking work on ORASIS—a patented, FDA registered surgical device poised to revolutionise reconstructive microsurgery worldwide.
Born from the challenges surgeons face in performing delicate operations under high magnification, ORASIS is a smart microsurgical background device with built-in autonomous irrigation and suction. It improves surgical visibility, reduces operating time, and enhances safety—transforming complex operations from a two-person job to one a single surgeon can perform independently.
ORASIS has already been registered with the FDA and has drawn early interest from leading US hospitals, who are preparing to trial the device. Backed by strong IP, support from world-renowned surgeons, and selection as one of only five global companies endorsed by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, ORASIS is well positioned for commercial launch in the US.
Dr Khajuria, a reconstructive plastic surgeon and founder of Avance Innovations, is raising a seed round to bring ORASIS to market.
If you'd like to learn more or get involved, Ankur would be delighted to connect (ankur@avanceinnovations.com).
We are also thrilled to have Ankur join the Wellingborough School Foundation Board helping secure philanthropic gifts from our community.

OW News

OW signs with top London Performance Agency



OW Emily-May Palmer (13-22, N) has signed with Robert & Day Management, a London talent agency representing film, tv and theatre. Emily-May has just graduated from Bird College Conservatoire for Dance and Musical Theatre with a BA in Dance, Music and Theatre Performance . For her final performance with Bird College, Emily-May played the part of Kiki in Flashdance which garnered the interest of several talent agencies.

OW run Northamptonshire business wins national competition

Jeyes of Earls Barton were crowned winners of Best National Gift Retailer within a Visitor Attraction at this years Gift Awards 2025.
The business is run by Georgina, Philippa (84-89, M) and Anna Jeyes (Junior School).
They were shortlisted alongside some incredible venues including Blenheim Palace Gift Shop, Natural History Museum Gift Shop, Savill's of Windsor Park Gardens, Loch Leven's Larder and Pearce's Farm Shop.
Philippa said: "We are so proud of our business, our Jeyes team and we are extremely grateful to our customers and families for their support. There was lucky dust sprinkled over our table...with three different family run businesses receiving awards was just fabulous and we were thrilled to meet, chat and share the experience of the evening with them all."
Anna Jeyes adds: "The passion we all have for our gift businesses shone through and the laughter and support in the whole room was heart warming. It is an honour to be named 'The Best' against some of the country's finest Visitor Attraction Gift Shops."



OW elected Chairman of Northampton Saints

Ella Bevan (79-90, N) has been appointed as Northampton Saints new Chairman having served as a Director on the Saints' board since 2012. She follows in the footsteps of her brother and OW Leon Barnwell (79-84, G) who has also held the position in the past.
"I'm honoured and extremely excited to be appointed as chairman of Northampton Saints," Bevan said. "The club has been an important part of my life, and all my family's lives, for almost 40 years."



Picture: Northampton Saints

Share your news with us.
Get in contact with your news and achievements at kpo@wellingboroughschool.org

OW News

Lucas Charity Cycle



OW Lucas Turnbull-Stubbs (17-24, PS) is undertaking a grueling 450km cycle from London to Paris to raise vital funds for the charity Back Up.

This iconic ride was pioneered for handcyclists by Lucas's Dad, Danny Turnbull, a former Trustee of Back Up. Danny's participation back in 2012 had a huge impact on all the other riders who took part, proving just what is possible for people with a spinal cord injury. In 2017, Danny very sadly passed away at the age of 43 after an ongoing battle with cancer.

Lucas is excited to finally be a part of this ride which has played a significant role in his life despite not having the opportunity to participate in it before. Of the ride Lucas said, "It's incredible to ride alongside so many others who are dedicated to raising money for the same cause, especially since my dad was so deeply involved with Back Up.
The London to Paris bike ride starts on Friday 26th to Monday 29th September 2025. Over 3 days I will cycle 450km. Any donations are much appreciated!"

You can read more about the challenge and donate towards Lucas's fundraiser here.

London Marathon Runners 2025

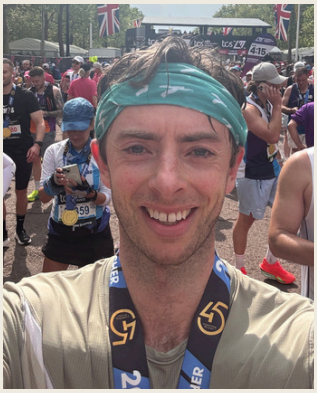
Many Old Wellingburians took part in the 2025 TCS London Marathon. For the 45th anniversary of the London marathon the Guinness World Record title was broken for the largest number of finishers (56,640 out of 57,449). Some of those who took part shared their experience with us.



Pamela Dunton (00-14, M) ran her first marathon in a time of 5:19:13.
Pamela ran on behalf of the charity, Children with Cancer UK and to date has raised over £700 for the charity. If you would like to donate towards Pamela's fundraiser, you can do so here.



Elsa Hicks (12-21, W) ran her first London Marathon on behalf of Hernia International Carpenter. Hernia International Carpenter is a charity that provides healthcare, specifically Hernia surgery, to the people of Carpenter and other nearby villages in rural Northern Ghana where accessibility to healthcare is limited. To date she has raised over £3,889. If you would like to donate towards Elsa's fundraiser, you can do so here.



Alex Merry (95-05, G) completed the London Marathon having only received his cardiologists approval 10 days prior. Alex suffers from vaccine-induced myopericarditis affects and has only been able to start exercising again 2 years ago.



Imogen Smith (13-21, W) was incredibly pleased to have completed her first marathon in a time of 03:49:00.
Imogen ran on behalf of Neuroblastoma UK, in memory of her cousin, Phoebe. If you would like to donate towards Imogen's fundraiser, you can do so here.

OW News - Celebrations

Wedding

Alex Linnell (09-13, P) married, bride Natasha Wiffill in Kew Gardens, London on the 17th April 2025.
Around 25 OWs were present at the wedding, which also included former Head of Prep, Richard Mitchell (04-15, Staff) who provided a reading.





Wedding

Hannah Edmunds (09-14, N) and Harry Underwood (05-12, PS) tied the knot on the 22nd February 2025 at the Tythe Barn in Bicester.
Hannah and Harry met and started their relationship at Wellingborough School. As a result no fewer than 15 OWs attended the wedding.




Wedding

Lauren Arnott (00-14, W) married Ben Humphreys (02-10, F) on the 7th March 2025 at Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham.
They initially met in the CCF at Wellingborough School but began dating 5 years ago.



Birth

Katy Flint (02-10, W) and partner, Christopher Ransom, welcomed a baby daughter in March. Lyla Helen Ransom was born 13th March 2025, weighing 7lb8oz.



From the archives

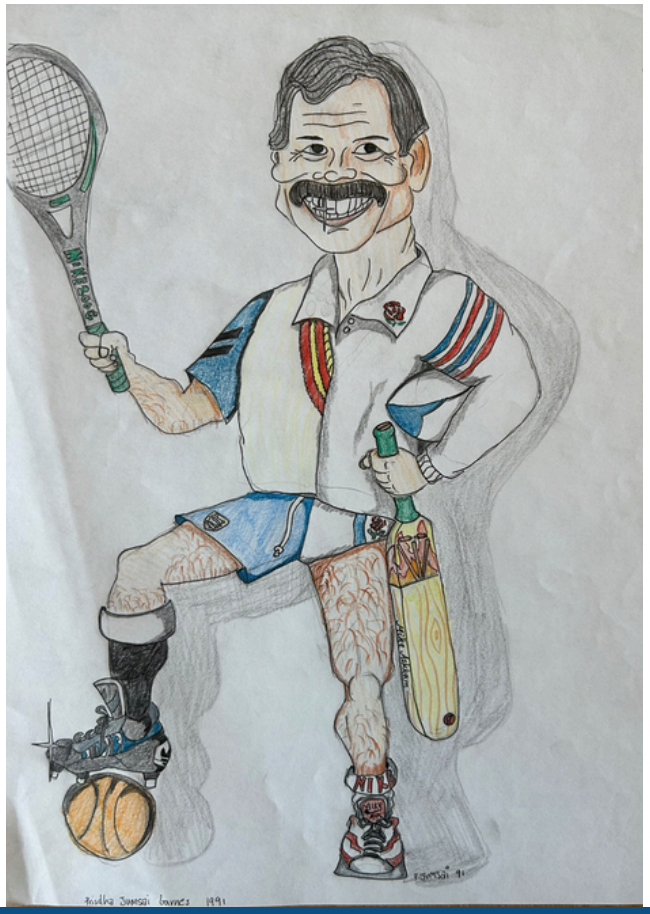
Prefects of 75-76



Prefects of 85-86



An excellent sketch of Mike Askham (78-13, Staff), drawn by Prisdha Jumsai (89-94, G), from 1991







Your Memories

In May we shared these two pictures of the old outdoor swimming pool on the OW social media pages. Here we share a snippet of some of those memories you shared with us.

"I certainly do remember the swimming pool during my time at Wellingborough - it seemed like lessons always ended up being on the coldest of days. Much more enjoyable during the summer holidays - my family paid the £10 for a key to the pool and we swam pretty much every evening. One of my abiding memories was being in the pool during a thunderstorm - probably summer 88 or 89.....!"

"I remember ending up in the pool fully clothed one evening not long before it permanently closed. The lifeguard was not impressed but my goodness it was fun."

"I remember winning the back stroke (legs only) race in the early 70s - even then the diving board had been banned because too many had whacked their heads on the bottom of the pool..."

"I remember our class all lining up nervously along the edge one very cold morning, until I was pushed in and broke the ice on top. End of swimming lesson. I still can't stand cold water!"

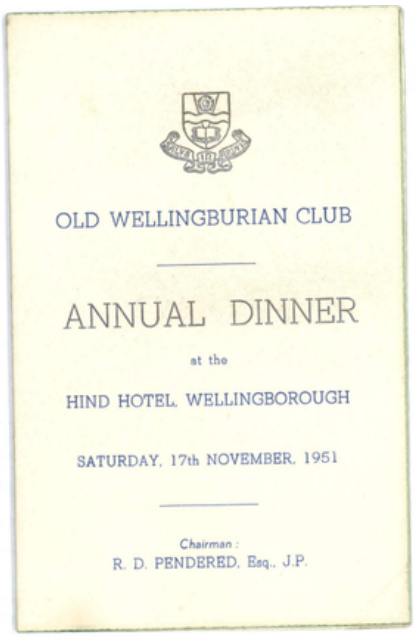
"I remember having to do synchro swimming in there when some poor sports teacher thought that would be a great idea with a group of very high spirited teenage girls! I just remember the total mayhem and hilarity when we were told to spin fast like soggy ballerinas in the water and there was a tidal wave that probably reached Rushden!"

From the archives

School production, 42nd Street, from 2008



Old Wellingburian Club annual dinner menu, from 1951



OLD WELLINGBURIAN CLUB

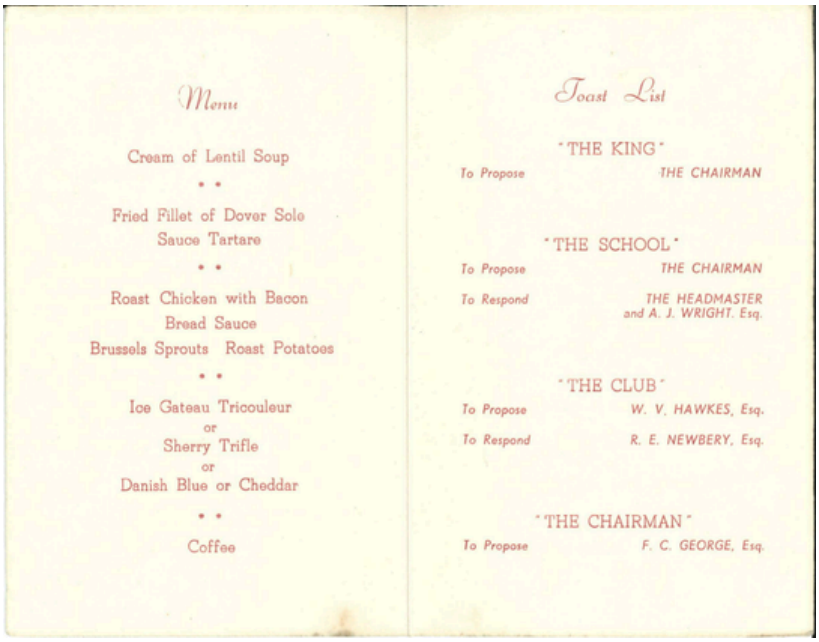
ANNUAL DINNER

at the

HIND HOTEL, WELLINGBOROUGH

SATURDAY, 17th NOVEMBER, 1951

Chairman:
R. D. PENDERED, Esq., J.P.



Menu

Cream of Lentil Soup

• •

Fried Fillet of Dover Sole
Sauce Tartare

• •

Roast Chicken with Bacon
Bread Sauce
Brussels Sprouts Roast Potatoes

• •

Ice Gateau Tricouleur
or
Sherry Trifle
or
Danish Blue or Cheddar

• •

Coffee

Toast List

"THE KING"
To Propose — THE CHAIRMAN

"THE SCHOOL"
To Propose — THE CHAIRMAN
To Respond — THE HEADMASTER and A. J. WRIGHT, Esq.

"THE CLUB"
To Propose — W. V. HAWKES, Esq.
To Respond — R. E. NEWBERY, Esq.

"THE CHAIRMAN"
To Propose — F. C. GEORGE, Esq.

OW News - Obituaries

Duncan Ellison (73-04, Staff)
Died April 7th 2025

Obituary kindly written by Charles Linfield



Duncan Ellison, who has died at the age of 81, came to Wellingborough in 1973 as Senior Art Master, having previously taught at Reigate Grammar School, a leading independent school attended by the Prime Minister, where his abilities were greatly valued. Like myself a late appointment of the reforming Headmaster John Sugden, he waged war from the outset on slackness amongst senior pupils in the Art Department in the notorious Room 9, and very quickly made his mark as an outstanding practitioner of his subject, with a particular interest in ceramics. In 1974, with the opening of the Spencer Art Building, he established a pottery in his new headquarters. A resident bachelor, he soon established a very popular Saturday evening Art prep, and worked tirelessly to assist his pupils, the most gifted of whom produced work of exemplary standard. His examination results were consistently outstanding, the result of his insistence on maximum effort and commitment.

In thirty years as a tutor, Duncan served successively in Cripps', Garne's, Fryer's, Weymouth, Platt's and finally Marsh, working with the remaining boarders in all four boys' houses. In 1979 he inherited Tom Peters' old quarters in Fryer's, and I was especially grateful for his assistance as resident tutor in my last five years in Platt's. In 1990, when the Spencer Building became the Pre-Prep School, and the Art Department moved to the Gent Centre, Duncan occupied a spacious flat adjoining his classroom and remained there until his retirement in 2004, frequently entertaining colleagues and friends.

As a member of the Resident Bachelor Common Room Duncan was a jolly fellow who often provided wine for supper. He liaised for many years with the caterers on behalf of staff and pupils to ensure satisfactory feeding arrangements, and shared his knowledge of antiques with Tom Peters. He assisted Father Richard Bolton in the Chapel, and became a regular attender at St Mary's Church. He also edited the school magazine, and helped with the scenery for school plays. An outstanding calligraphist, he was a leading member of the Italic Handwriting Society, and took enormous pride in producing the prize labels for Speech Day.

After retirement Duncan lived in the town for a further six years, during which time he spent a very enjoyable term as a resident master at Ampleforth College in Yorkshire, where his commitment was greatly appreciated. He went to Stratford with James Hasler to see Shakespeare plays and acted as a room steward at Deene Park. Father Richard then recommended him to seek admission as a Brother of The Charterhouse in London, and he was duly accepted in 2011. For a time he acted as a leading tour guide there and assisted with the house magazine, before his health declined. He was instrumental in 2018 in facilitating the London OW Dinner.

Duncan was an enormously generous, knowledgeable and cultured man whom it was a privilege to have as a friend for many years. He assisted with transport to Swindon on my own retirement, and twice accompanied me on tours of Northern France, giving a magnificent impromptu lecture on the outside of Chartres Cathedral, only to be thwarted by a state guide when he attempted the same for the interior. He will be fondly remembered by countless OWs who benefited from his teaching and support, as well as former colleagues and the many other people who came into contact with him.

OW News - Obituaries

A Tribute to Duncan Ellison
By OW Jeremy Peake (75-85, W)

Affectionately known as 'Dunky' to his students, Duncan Ellison was an exceptional teacher at Wellingborough. He ran a department that set many of his pupils on the path to a creative career. A talented artist himself, with a keen eye for quality, he had a particular ability to identify and develop the artistic strengths of each of his students and bring out the best in them. Though his teaching style was quite low-key compared to some of his contemporaries, he was no soft touch, as anyone who failed to complete their art homework soon realised! He took his subject extremely seriously and expected no less from his students.

Former pupils of Duncan's will remember his kindness of spirit, sound advice, and expertise in many artistic disciplines. He had a lifelong fascination with lettering, writing in a beautiful italic hand, and his reports were works of art in themselves. He also had a deep knowledge of Gothic architecture, and his infectious enthusiasm for these subjects inspired many of his students to pursue careers in graphic design and architecture.

However, it was in the field of ceramics that his greatest interest lay. The pottery departments he built, first in the Spencer Building by the playing fields, and later on Castle Street, were truly special places. While the facilities for making pots at Wellingborough would have put many an art college to shame, it was the environment he created that truly inspired his students. Duncan also amassed a remarkable collection of ceramics, which he used to enhance his teaching. Surrounded by those beautiful pots, and with Radio 3 playing continuously in the background, the scene was set for the creation of superb work in the pottery room. Whether thrown on the wheel or built from slabs of clay, the department was overflowing with artistic works in progress. Some pieces incorporated lettering or architecture, including accurately depicted models of local buildings, churches, and even cathedrals.

Duncan befriended the top professional potters in the country and regularly took his students to meet them in their studios. He urged them to learn from the potters' influences and methods, encouraging them to try these techniques themselves upon returning to the pottery department. If they required special clay, glazes, or equipment, Duncan would invest in them. This dedication to the craft rubbed off on anyone who studied with him, several of whom went on to gain degrees in ceramics, and his influence is still keenly felt among his former students today. He kept in touch with several of them for many years after they left Wellingborough and followed their careers keenly, even after his retirement. Some became personal friends right up to the end of his life, and I feel extremely privileged to have been one of them.

In his latter years, Duncan suffered from increasingly debilitating Parkinson's disease, though he never lost his spirit nor his love of fine wines. He would always greet old friends at his home in The Charterhouse with a freshly opened bottle of red and a bowl of nibbles. He died in London on 7th April 2025 after a short illness, and his funeral was held at St Mary the Virgin Church, Wellingborough. He had been a worshipper at St Mary's; a church noted, of course, for its architectural excellence. Fittingly, Duncan's calligraphic designs featured on the cover of the order of service. It was a final and elegant reminder of a thoroughly decent man who dedicated his life to art, education, and the nurturing of young talent.







Duncan Ellison

OW News - Obituaries

Melvyn Douglas Hunter (74-97, Staff)
Died February 12th 2025



Obituary kindly written by Robert Batley (87-13, Staff)

Melvyn joined the staff in September 1974, one of Graham Garrett's first appointments to teach Science, having graduated from St John's College York. He was a dependable member of the Science Department, teaching Chemistry, Physics and starting the Human Biology GCSE course. He taught for 23 years in the Senior School, and also Computing at Junior School and Shell Form level.

He was an academic tutor in Weymouth House for 18 years. His encouragement and support in house activities together with his indomitable sense of humour and willingness to help others with his expertise, sound advice and kindness was appreciated. He ran the Cub Scouts, and helped with the Scouts and ran joint Camps and Pack Holidays. It was at a Scout training course, he met Lesley, his future wife. For many years he taught Cycling Proficiency to Junior School pupils.

Melvyn was born in Lincolnshire, both his mother and father being Scottish, of the Gordon and Campbell clans respectively. His father was a GP, moving from hospital in Lincolnshire to Newcastle. His father encouraged Melvyn to play music on piano, organ and bassoon. He had a great ability playing church organs. Together with his younger sister, Elaine, they joined Newcastle Youth Orchestra and played in concerts at Newcastle City Hall.

At St. John's he joined the TA, and served for 19 years, reaching the rank of Major and briefly posted abroad. He was Captain, Officer Commanding the Army Section of the CCF. Later, promoted to CCF Contingent Commander as Major, enabling cadets to experience a wide range of activities.

He left school, to set up his computer business, but continued teaching, BTech and City and Guilds courses at a local college. He also found time to study for further degrees. He served as a governor in a number of church schools, also Chair of Governors, including financial governor. He was a safeguarding trainer for Peterborough Diocese, he monitored church websites and school websites' content in RE and worship. He was a lifelong supporter of Newcastle United and a long-term supporter of Northampton Saints.

Melvyn, together with two other parishioners from St Mary's Church Rushden, in 1991 were invited to establish Whitefriars Church Rushden. So, begun a long period of Christian service, in which he used his wide range of skills. In an official role as a Pastoral Assistant, he provided encouragement and support to many, and he supplemented that by quietly taking on many administrative and practical responsibilities, including as Church Secretary, safeguarding officer, working the sound desk during church services and leading services in care homes. His church involvement and visits extended to the Diocese of Bungoma, Kenya, where he combined his generosity and IT skills to provide personal computers to many people who would otherwise go without, also helping to provide water to remote villages.

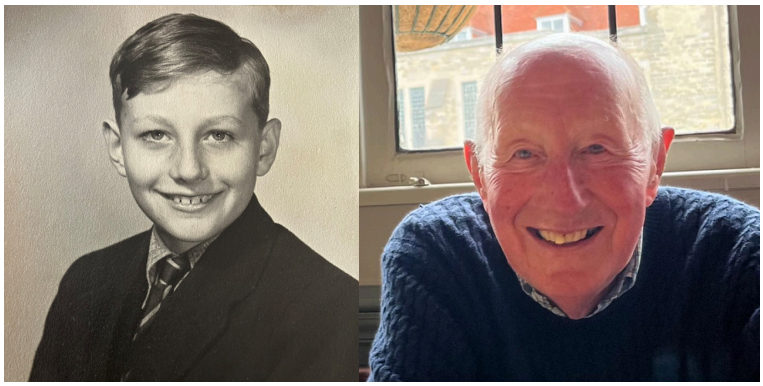
Melvyn died after a short illness, bravely borne. His strong Christian faith shone through to his final days, and still caring for others.

Melvyn had many interests, proud of his Scots roots, but above all, a dedicated family man, loved and greatly missed by Lesley, his children, Ruth and Matthew, grandchildren, and his sister Elaine.

OW News - Obituaries

Michael Gent (48-58, PS)

Died February 14th 2025



It is with deep sadness that we report that Michael Gent (48 – 63, PS), former OW President, beloved husband to Kathy, and dad to his daughters Rebecca Clarke (nee Gent) (80 – 87, N) and Victoria Kermeen (nee Gent) (83 – 90, N) and his stepchildren Richard and Caroline, passed away suddenly on February 14th 2025 at the age of 84.

Michael was born in Wellingborough early in the war and spent the first few years of his life on the family farm in Rothersthorpe, before moving to Wellingborough and then Earls Barton when his father returned from war, with his parents and younger sister Patricia. He initially attended Avenue Schol in Wellingborough, before following in his father, Richard Gent's, footsteps attending Wellingborough School. He joined the Junior School in 1948, leaving the Senior School in July 1963.

Michael really enjoyed his time at Wellingborough School. As well as studying, he was a keen rifle marksmen and swimmer, representing the school in both events. As a member of Parkers House, he became a house prefect in his Lower VIth and school prefect during his Upper VIth.

After school, Michael went on to Pilkingtons in St Helens to study glass technology. He loved his time there, living at the YMCA, taking an active part as Lieutenant in the Territorial Army and bombing around on his Vespa in and out of Liverpool. Having obtained his qualifications, Michael returned to Northants and settled in Wellingborough. He took on a role in Richard Gent Ltd, the family firm, where he worked until he retired.

During his adult life, he remained very involved with the school, attending many Old Wellingburian events such as Open Days, Remembrance Services and OW dinners. He continued to maintain friendships from those school years until he passed away. Both his daughters, Rebecca and Victoria also attended Wellingborough School, along with his nephews James, Nick, Ben and Marcus Sharp. Rebecca and Victoria have very fond memories of spending large parts of their summer holidays completing laps in the outdoor school pool with him and he was very proud to have a Junior School cup for all round girls swimmer named after him. His involvement with the OW Club grew and in 2014 he proudly became President of the OW Club for a year, organising the London dinner for one of his favourite places, Lords Cricket Ground.

Michael had a busy retirement, being involved in the local Rotary Club, Lodge, playing golf, completing talks for many groups on a wide variety of topics, completing many online courses, gardening and being an involved husband, father and grandfather to nine grandchildren.

Michael is sorely missed by his family and friends.

Peter Tait (50-60, F)

Died 4th May 2025



Born in July 1941, Peter attended the School from 1950-1960, where in his final year he held the role of Head Prefect. Whilst at the School Peter was also a talented cricketer.

After leaving Wellingborough, Peter trained as a Civil Engineer, and his whole career was spent working for W S Atkins. Following retirement, Peter resided in the South-East of France where he lived with his wife, Danielle. Peter passed away on the 4th May 2025 in Saint-Laurent-Du-Var.

David Sherwood (61-76, Staff)

Died 7th March 2025

Having joined the School in 1961 as a member of the science department, David later taught mathematics after completing his Open University degree whilst at the School. He also gave most valuable service as the Officer Commanding of the C.C.F, and on the sports field.

David Sherwood died peacefully with his wife, Pauline, and children Adam and Helen by his side.

OW News - Obituaries

Andrew Hine (2019-2021, Staff)

Died April 15th 2025



Air Commodore Andrew Hine, who has died of cancer aged 58, was a Tornado pilot who, over a period of 12 years, was deployed to the Persian Gulf region on nine occasions to fly operations and patrols over Iraq in support of United Nations Resolutions. In 2015, Hine decided to leave the RAF and begin a second career as a schoolteacher.
Hine, a fitness fanatic, enjoyed hiking, golf and running, which included a few marathons and "iron man" triathlons.

Jonathan Cox (71-77, PS)

Died June 14th 2023



Jonathan Cox, who was born in March 1960, gained a Scholarship to attend the School in 1971 where he was placed in the Steyne's House.
After Wellingborough he attended Manchester University, studying Architecture. From there he worked as an architect in London, eventually working as a schools architect for one of the local authorities.

David Wilkins (68-73, P)

Died May 31st 2025

David wife, Helen, would like to notify OWs of his passing away on May 31st 2025. If you would like details of the funeral arrangements please contact OW Matthew James (86-73, P) at mattdj850@live.co.uk

Alan J Fells (45-55, W)

Died March 2025

Alan J Wells was initially in the Junior School, as it then was, from 1945 and then in Weymouth House, leaving Wellingborough in 1955. As he resided in the London area, Alan attended the OW London dinners for over 60 years, his last attendance being in 2023. As a regular attender at the OW Golf Society meetings he enjoyed watching the OWGS play at the Halford Hewitt in Deal. His family were founders of the London wine importers John E Fells Ltd, and he was a member of the Vintners Livery Company, although he was a Chartered Accountant by profession. He will be sadly missed by his friends and family.

Ian Rowse (74-99, Staff)

Died February 2025



It's with much sadness that the family share the news that Ian Rowse died peacefully in his sleep on 6 March 2025.
As a child, Ian was a pupil at Lawrence Sherriff School in Rugby. He became head boy, and captain of the Rugby team before returning there as a teacher after his university studies. Then followed teaching spells and Magdalen College, Oxford (where his children were born), and a brief spell in Liverpool, before Ian arrived at Wellingborough School in 1974 to teach physics. Between 1974 and retirement in 1999 Ian became head of Physics, Housemaster of Steynes and Senior Master. He also loved coaching various rugby teams and running the Royal Navy CCF section, thoroughly enjoying numerous trips on boats – his joint passion alongside rugby.
Ian enthusiastically threw himself into teaching and embraced all aspects of Wellingborough School life. His enthusiasm was appreciated by so many of his former pupils who kept in touch and remember him fondly.
Ian was followed into the school by his sons Stuart (77-84, PS) and Pete (80-85, PS), and later by his grandchildren James (04-16, G) and Sam (08-20, G).
In retirement Ian bought a boat and took up golf, regularly playing with partners including former Wellingborough School masters John Beales and Robin Hickling. He was a wonderful and supportive grandfather to his grandchildren Sarah, Ben, James and Sam who miss him and cherish the time they spent with Ian. Ian supported his grandchildren's sports games at school and was known to encourage them loudly from the sidelines and even gave mars bars to the try scorers. This wouldn't be a surprise to those who remember Ian!
In everything he did over many years at Wellingborough School, Ian was supported by his wife Rosemary who, also cared for him so well when he became ill.
Ian is sorely missed by his family but, in his own words, Ian said that he'd had a good innings.

School News

Wellingborough School's Co-Curriculum: A Legacy of Opportunity









Scott Benest is the Director of Co-Curriculum at the School, having joined in September 2023. Prior to this, Scott has held a range of strategic roles within the Education, IT, Charity, and Defence Sectors. Here he talks about the impact of the School's Co-Curriculum programme and how alumni can support.

Wellingborough School's Co-Curriculum: A Legacy of Opportunity
At Wellingborough School, the exceptional Co-curriculum plays a vital role in shaping pupils beyond the classroom. From Sports, Music, Drama, Leadership, and Service, we foster resilience, creativity, and personal growth.
The recent ISI report has highlighted our Co-curriculum as a significant strength, stating: "The curriculum is complemented by a well-resourced Co-curricular programme, which benefits pupils of all ages and abilities. The programme is wide-ranging and well-coordinated and is designed to support pupils' skills, interests and personal development. Pupils' participation is closely monitored, and the programme is adapted to meet pupils' changing interests. This is a significant strength of the school."
This distinction is a testament to the commitment of staff, pupils, parents, and alumni, all of whom contribute to the vibrant learning environment at Wellingborough.

The Role of Volunteers
At Wellingborough School, we believe in community engagement. Many of our pupils and staff actively contribute to the local area, and we are committed to expanding opportunities through volunteer involvement.

Pupils already benefit from volunteers in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award, and we are now opening opportunities across our entire Co-curriculum. We welcome support in Sports, Music, Drama, Leadership, and Service initiatives.

Why Your Support Matters
The Co-curricular offering which has been pivotal in the development of our young people remains mainly unchanged across the years, meaning alumni hold invaluable insights that can continue to enrich pupil experiences. Whether through mentoring, coaching, or simply providing touchline support, your expertise can make a real difference.

Volunteering is also an opportunity to learn new skills, gain qualifications, and build meaningful connections. All volunteers will receive training in their area of interest, and the school will conduct DBS checks to ensure a safe and supportive environment.

Get Involved
We welcome professionals, enthusiasts, and supporters of all backgrounds—whether you're a musician, coach, or someone eager to contribute. If you share our passion for helping young people develop confidence and ambition, we would love to hear from you.

Join our diverse team of volunteers, alumni, and staff, and be part of Wellingborough School's ongoing legacy. Complete the form below to start your journey with us.

Together, we can continue to nurture a thriving, supportive, and inspiring community for all pupils, past and present.

Join us

Scott Benest
Director of The Co-curriculum

School Inspection

In January the School underwent a 3 days inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The School is extremely proud of the latest report and we are pleased to be able to share the following excerpts with you.













Safety in Sport

In June, the School announced their partnership with Luca Health, becoming the first independent school in the UK to implement a comprehensive concussion and welfare management system as part of the pupil welfare provision.
This milestone marks a significant step forward in how schools approach student safety in sports—especially in rugby and other contact activities. With head injuries accounting for 25% of all sports injuries, this partnership equips the School with the tools to manage them confidently and responsibly.



School Careers Service

Our Year 12 students are currently seeking Work Placements during the w/c 23 June 2025 in order to give them an insight into the world of work and to help them to build on their skills and experience. Currently, due to more companies moving towards 'working from home', it has been challenging for many to secure placements thus far. If you or your company may be able to offer an opportunity for one of our keen and bright Year 12 students, we would love to hear from you!



Areas that we are particularly looking for are as follows:

Medicine
Politics
Finance
Marketing
Geography
History
IT
Engineering

To find out more information, email Alex Arber, the School's Head of Careers at aar@wellingboroughschool.org

Foundation News



Welcome to this bumper edition of the OW Newsletter! A big thank you to Katie for compiling this ever-growing edition, and to all the OWs and wider members of the Wellingborough School Community who contributed by sending in news, joining us at events, or visiting the school. If you're planning to visit Wellingborough, please do let us know when you plan to be in Wellingborough – you will be very welcome.

In this edition, we have the final thoughts from our outgoing Headmaster, Andrew Holman, who reflects on his seven years as Head before moving to Nottingham High School in September. We wish him well and thank him for his support of the OW Club and the School Foundation.

Congratulations are in order for our Director of Co-curricular, Scott Benest. Having joined in September 2023, he has already made a significant impact on our co-curricular programme. The recent ISI Inspection report highlighted our co-curriculum as a significant strength, benefiting pupils of all ages (see page 17). Andrew puts this recognition in perspective on page two, noting that "the last three HMC schools to be awarded a Significant Strength for their Co-curriculum are us, St Paul's in London, and Eton!"

Sport is a vital part of our co-curricular programme, and we were delighted to hear that OW Ella Bevan (79-90, N) has been elected Chairman of Northampton Saints (see page 10). Wellingborough School is a platinum member of Saints, benefiting from connections within the club and access to their coaches for all our pupils amongst other benefits.

Foundation News

Your legacy can help secure Wellingborough School's future

Each generation will reap what the former generation has sown.



2025 marks 430 years since Wellingborough School was founded in 1595. Today, Wellingborough School is in a strong position, but we cannot rest on our laurels and can only stay ahead of the game by planning strategically for the future, looking outwards and asking for your support.

A legacy gift is a unique type of donation. It costs nothing in one's lifetime, but its impact is felt by many in the future. Wellingborough School has benefitted from legacies since its earliest days and each year legacies support transformational bursaries and our campus development.

A Will is very personal, and we understand if you prefer to keep your plans private. If you do let us know about a planned legacy, we will be able to keep you and your family informed of the impact your gift could make in supporting our pupils and staff.

Any gift, no matter how large or small, in your Will will make a lasting impact on future generations of pupils at Wellingborough School.

Will you consider adding your legacy to Wellingborough School's future by including Wellingborough School in your Will?

Thank You

A final thought

All legacies made to the School are exempt from UK Inheritance and Capital gains Taxes. Under current rules, if you leave ten per cent or more of your chargeable net estate to charity, the Inheritance tax rate on the whole of your taxable estate is reduced from 40% to 36%.







Kind regards

Graham Papenfus
Foundation and Development Director
Email: gnp@wellingboroughschool.org
Mobile: 07583682962

Sports Sponsorship

We recently launched opportunities for our community to support our pupils on the playing field by sponsoring one of our 1st teams. The annual sponsorship of £2,000 per team makes a huge difference, providing funds for equipment not available within current budgets. For example, the ball machine purchased from the tennis sponsorship by Rokka Dental this term.

Our current sponsors are:
Rugby – The Deli @ Harvest
Tennis – Rokka Dental
Football – Huxloe Group
Netball – Case Security
Hockey – Nineteen Accountants

Are you able to join the above sponsors next year by sponsoring one or more of the following teams?
Rugby Cricket Tennis Athletics Equestrian Badminton Golf

In return for your sponsorship, we offer:

- Branding on the 1st Team playing shirts
- Recognition on all our social media platforms and other marketing materials
- Invitation to our annual donor and sponsor thank you event, taking place on 19th September in the new Tech Centre, hosted by our new Headmaster Simon Hawkes






Sports sponsor recognised as top UK Business



E2E, in association with The Independent, proudly unveiled the E2E International 100 list, a definitive list recognising the exceptional achievements of the top 100 businesses in the UK. Companies on the list have demonstrated successful expansion into international markets, achieved the strongest revenue growth over the past two years, and created a successful business model that has put them in the top echelon of international businesses.
Huxloe Logistics Ltd, based in Kettering is named on this years list. Huxloe group have been sponsoring the 1st Football team since 2024.

Stay in Contact

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