



150
1875-2025
ACHIEVING THE EXCEPTIONAL



150 YEARS

A LEYSIAN JOURNEY | 1875-2025



A Message from the Head

Dear Alumni and Friends of The Leys,

As we celebrate the remarkable milestone of our 150th anniversary, our 'Sesquicentenary' to give it its precise title, I welcome you with immense pride to this commemorative magazine. Over the past century and a half, The Leys has built on the vision and insight of our Methodist 'Founding Fathers' and has succeeded in forging a distinctive identity as a beacon of excellence and independence in education, fostering generations of leaders, innovators and compassionate citizens.

The many stories told here, across a timeline of some of the biggest school, UK and world events, are a celebration of the huge diversity celebrated throughout our history. While we couldn't, of course, include everyone, this magazine offers a snapshot of each decade, showcasing achievements, both personal and professional, from across the world. We seek to celebrate and reflect the ethos of The Leys - priding itself on a broad education - and to highlight how pupils throughout the last 150 years have benefited from their time here, as well as what the School has come to mean to them.

A special thank you goes to John Harding for his invaluable contribution as an expert Leysian historian, meticulously documenting the history of our school from 1875 to the 1960s. We are also deeply grateful to other members of the Leysian family who have chronicled the more recent decades through their personal contributions; the team have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to catch up with so many Old Leysians and members of Common Room.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our Development Team, and particularly Liz Walden, without whose hard work and editing expertise this publication would have been impossible.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

With best wishes,

Martin Priestley, Headmaster, The Leys

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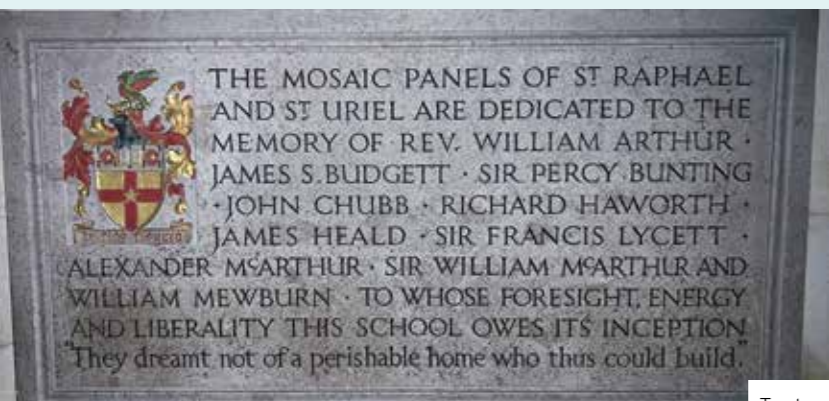
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1875–1880



The 10 Trustees

In the chancel of the School Chapel there is a plaque commemorating the Trustees. These were the men who put up the money for the purchase of the Leys estate from Robert Sayle, a distinguished Methodist shopkeeper in Cambridge, in 1875. Their names are William Arthur, James S Budgett, Sir Percy Bunting, John Chubb, Richard Haworth, James Heald, Sir Francis Lycett, Alexander McArthur, Sir William McArthur and William Mewburn. These ten people take us to the heart of the wealthy world of London commercial Methodism and beyond. They were involved in many good works: they founded Methodist places of worship, and also other Methodist schools, notably Methodist College, Belfast, and Truro School; many became MPs; they were deeply involved in the debates surrounding Forster's Education Act of 1870; and they helped to raise money for buildings of all sorts as well as the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.



Trustees Plaque



The Original XVI

The School opened on February 16 1875 with 16 pupils. It was hardly an auspicious start, but nevertheless it managed to grow and flourish. It helped that the original 16 included members of many prominent Methodist families spread over the country. The two prefects came from the West country. Others hailed from Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle and Northern Ireland. There was one of Trustee Alexander McArthur's sons, and William Moulton's eldest son, **James Hope Moulton**. **Joseph Richards** travelled from far-flung South Africa, and was to play cricket for that country, before it became a Test nation. Almost every boy was followed by further family members.



11 of the original 16 Leys pupils in 1875



Revd W F Moulton



The familiar red and gold coat of arms



Mrs Moulton's original Leysian coat of arms



Revd William Fiddian Moulton

The First Headmaster, 1875–98

William Moulton was a distinguished academic theologian who came from a strong Methodist background, being descended from John Bakewell, one of John Wesley's colleagues in the foundation of Methodism. A lecturer at the Methodist Training College in Richmond, Moulton was asked by the Methodist Conference to chair the committee choosing a site for a new Methodist school for the children of laymen. After the site at The Leys was chosen Moulton was appointed to be its first headmaster, despite his protestations. He would remain there until his death in 1898.

Moulton's wife, Hannah, is not a prominent figure in the history of the School, but she

appears to have been busy behind the scenes – including designing the first school crest: " ... in those early days ... a good many small matters came to me for the making. Dr Moulton asked me to design 'something simple and heraldically correct', whilst he supplied the motto."

In 1914, with an imminent visit from King George V to open the King's Building, the School needed to register its crest with the College of Arms. Mrs Moulton's design was rejected as its mixture of stars and spurs were too easily muddled, so at this point the familiar Leysian coat of arms evolved in a dramatic reworking by Sir Farnham Burke, Norroy King of Arms, and his colleagues.

Events Timeline 1875–2025

AT THE LEYS

BEYOND THE LEYS

1875 The Leys opens its doors

1876 The Leys Fortnightly started

1877 OLFC started and Kitchen built

1879 Great Hall, Music Rooms and Museum opened

1880 First OL Dinner; North A opened; Running track and Cricket pavilion completed

16 pupils on roll rising to 41

100 pupils on roll in 1877

1875 Second Public Health Act passed

1879 Edison's electric light



Portrait of Sir William

Sir William McArthur



The most eminent of the Trustees was Sir William McArthur. He can be seen in all his pomp in the portrait now hanging in the Dining Hall, painted in the year he was the first non-conformist Lord Mayor of London. McArthur and his brother Alexander came from Northern Ireland and ran a drapery business which operated in London and Sydney. Alexander ran the Australian side of the business but was also MP for Leicester. Sir William remained closely involved with the School, speaking at the opening of the Errol Street Mission in 1890, and helping to steer The Leys through the debt crisis of the end of the century. Alexander sent five sons to the School, creating the largest single extended Leysian family, some of whom are still involved with the School today.



Sydney Rupert Hodge

School 1875-80

Sydney joined the School in its second term. He went on to become Senior Prefect and is credited for establishing a high moral tone in the School. In his final year he spent most Sundays out preaching at local Methodist chapels. He was also passionate about rugby football and can be seen as a model of 'Muscular Christianity' - the belief that teamwork and sport were what distinguished a good public school man, coupled with an emphasis on community and helping others. He went on to become a medical missionary in China, and was a surgeon in the mission hospital in Hankow. He died in China in 1907.



Sydney Hodge

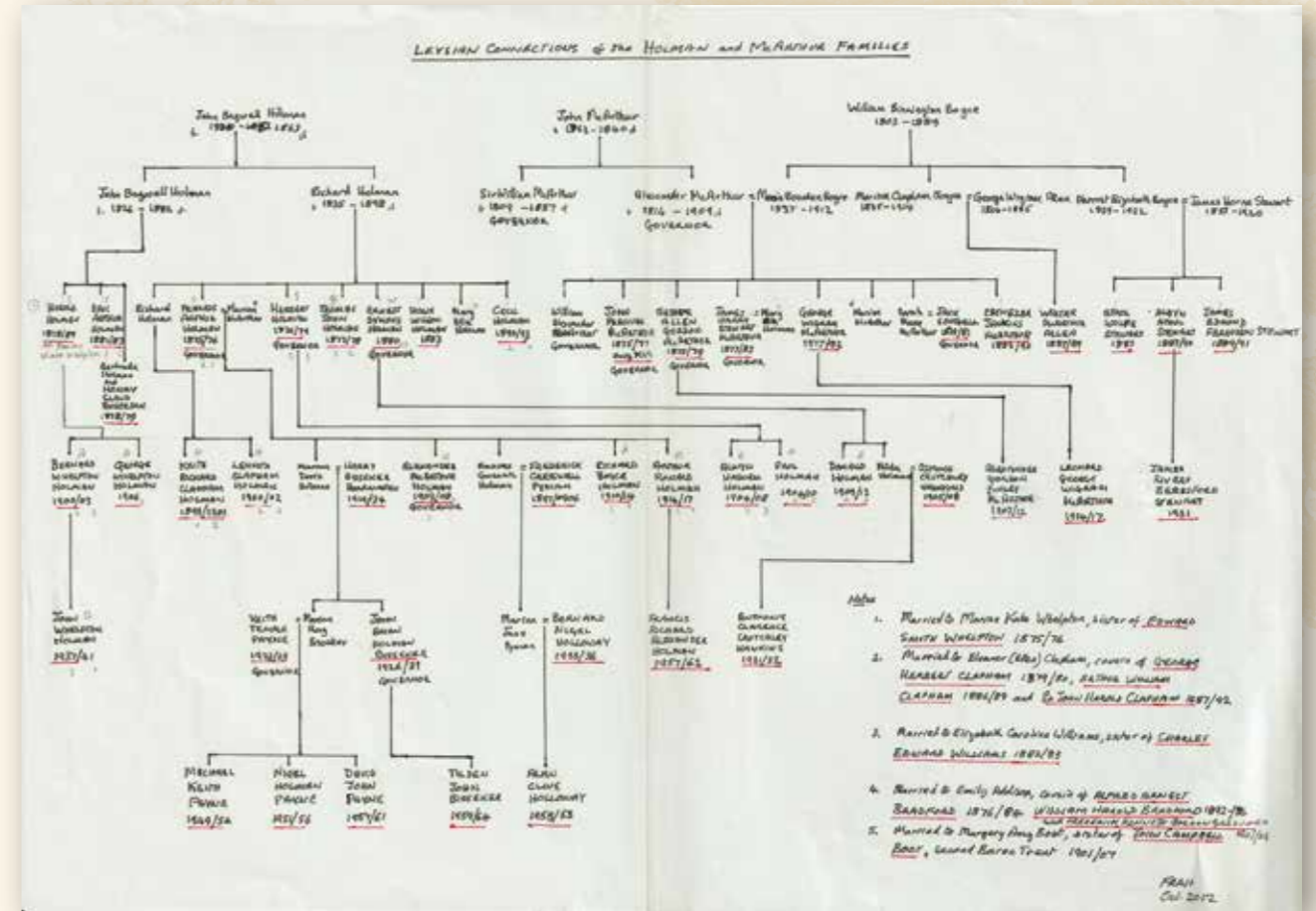
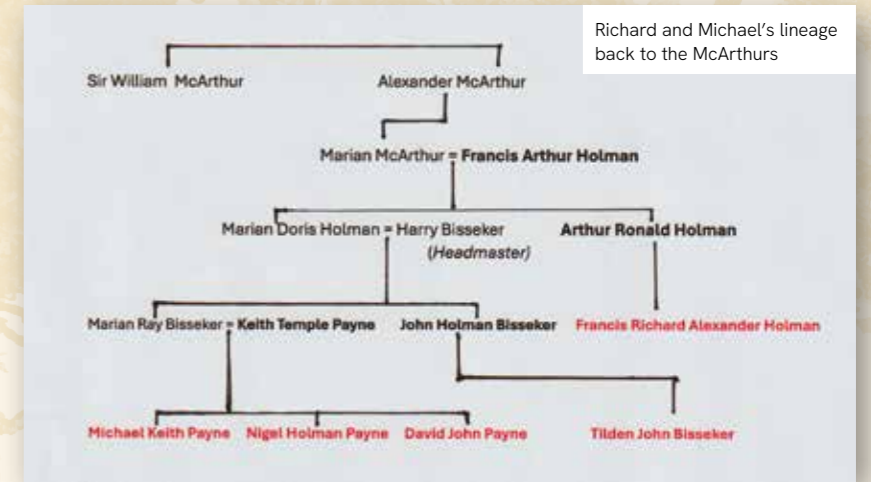


Richard Holman



McArthur, Holman, Bisseker and Payne: a Leysian Family History

Michael Payne, School 1949-54, was the first great-grandson of an Old Leysian to attend The Leys, and the great-great-grandson of Alexander McArthur. Michael's cousin (Francis) Richard Alexander Holman, North A 1957-62 has kindly supplied the following family tree, which he painstakingly pieced together some years ago. In the family tradition, Richard continues to be involved in Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission, and is a dedicated supporter of the School.



1881–1890



Sport

By the 1880s the pattern of sport had been developed: football in the autumn and cricket in the summer. In 1881 lacrosse was decided on for the middle term, but by 1912 it was clear that there were so few opportunities for matches that the decision was taken to switch to hockey. In the 1870s football was in the process of being formalised and the School started playing an indeterminate form; this was subsequently firmed up as rugby, but for almost a century the game was still referred to as football.

The School's original Rugby XV



Tinsley Lindley OBE North B and A 1884



There is no doubting, though, the most distinguished sporting Old Leysian of this era. Joining The Leys in 1884, Tinsley was one of the 19th century's great centre forwards in Association Football. At Caius College, Cambridge, he was a Triple Blue (soccer, cricket and rugby) and played football for the Corinthians and Casuals. In 1888, he returned home to join Nottingham Forest, but played two league matches for local rivals Notts County. In 1891 he also played for Crusaders and Swifts before guest-playing for Preston North End in 1892.

Tinsley's many transfers were due to his professional career as a barrister, and the fact that he remained an

amateur, despite many clubs wanting to hire him. He refused to wear football boots, preferring walking brogues, declaring that boots marred his great sprinting speed. He made his England debut on 13 March 1886, scoring in the 6-1 defeat of Ireland. He scored in six consecutive games (an England record), and totalled 14 international goals in 13 games. He also played cricket for the University of Cambridge and Nottinghamshire.

Additionally, Tinsley served as Chief Officer of the Nottingham Special Constabulary and Deputy Director of the Nottinghamshire Territorial Association during WWI, for which he was awarded the OBE in 1918. He died in Nottingham in 1940 aged 74.

The Leysian Mission



The Leys Christian Union first discussed the desirability of opening up a Mission in the East End of London in 1885. It was very much the practice for public schools in the last quarter of the century to establish such missions, inspired by Uppingham's example under the leadership of its headmaster, Edward Thring. The proposal had the strong backing of McArthur, who provided many of the original organisers. It opened in Whitecross Street in 1886, with Frank Holman, one of Alexander McArthur's sons-in-law, as its first secretary. These premises proved to be too cramped and insanitary. There was also another

problem as it was attracting "the street waifs and beggars, with whom working men and women simply would not meet", as the 1893 Directory puts it. It wasn't just a question of welcoming the poor into the Mission building, but of going out to evangelise. **Samuel Waddy**, School 1879-81, an early Old Leysian helper at the Mission, describes hymn-singing sessions outside the public houses of the neighbourhood. He claims that, unlike the Salvation Army, they were not pelted with rotten vegetables! It was decided to change the scope of the work, deal only with 'the working classes' and find new premises. The new Mission buildings, with **William Boney**, School 1876-80 as architect, were opened in 1890, at a ceremony at which both Dr Moulton and Sir William McArthur spoke.



The Leys Mission building in Whitecross Street



James Hope Moulton

School 1875-82;
Common Room
1886-1902

James was the elder son of William Moulton and one of the Original XVI. He read Classics at King's College Cambridge, then became a Methodist minister and taught at The Leys from 1886 to 1902. In 1888 he was elected to a Fellowship at King's, the first non-conformist to become an Oxbridge Fellow. At the outbreak of WWI, many English missionaries in India joined up as army chaplains. James went to the west coast where there was a considerable Zoroastrian community, of which religion he was one of the world's leading experts. Whilst there he heard that his elder son, Ralph, had been killed on the Western Front. He came home by ship but it was torpedoed in the Mediterranean; he managed to get into a boat but it drifted for three days before rescue arrived, by which time he had sadly died. His other son, Harold, survived the war and lived to take part in the service at King's Chapel in February 1975 to celebrate the School's Centenary.

1882 Christian and OL Unions formed; Entrance scholarships introduced

1884 Housekeeper appointed; first Directory published

1885 (and 1888) The Leys wins the South of England Lacrosse Championship (other teams were grown men!)

1886 Leysian Mission founded; School Secretary appointed

1887 Farm and Laundry acquired

1888 Games made compulsory

1884
Third Reform Act passed

1888
County Councils established

143
pupils on roll in 1887

1891–1900

Early Academics



Sir John Clapham

William Moulton wanted his school to lay equal weight on Languages and, especially, the Sciences, rather than focus solely on the Classics. The Leys was therefore very forward looking. With its proximity to the University, it sent many of its brightest pupils to Cambridge and many went on to distinguished careers. **Sir John Clapham**, North A 1887–92 became Professor of Economic History at The University of London and President of the British Academy; **Sir Joseph Barcroft**, North A 1888–92 was Professor of Physiology at Cambridge and a Fellow of The Royal Society; **Francis Bainbridge**, School 1888–93 was also a FRS, and Professor of Physiology at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; **Harold Gutteridge**, School 1889–95 was Professor of International Law at Cambridge; and **William Boney**, School 1876–80 was Professor of Chemical Technology at Imperial. It was a golden generation indeed.



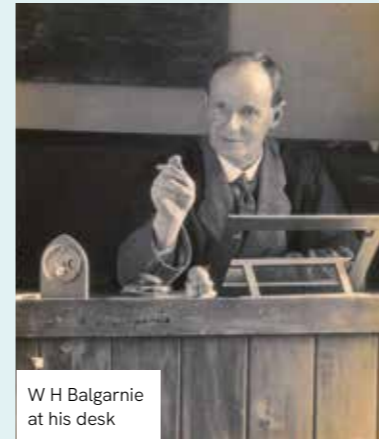
Sir Henry Dale in 1939

Sir Henry Dale School 1891–94

Henry Dale's father had been introduced to William Moulton at the Methodist Conference that year, where he was a lay representative. Dr Moulton said he was sorry the boy had not sat for a scholarship but that he could make special arrangements. Henry returned hastily from holiday to sit the papers in Cambridge and duly gained a scholarship. True to his principles of devising specific schemes of study to suit individual boys, Dr Moulton arranged for him to concentrate on the natural sciences. For chemistry and biology, Henry was taught by **Alfred Hutchinson**, School 1882–87. Hutchinson was reading for Part II of the Natural Sciences Tripos at Trinity and taught Henry the chemistry and physiology syllabus. Unsurprisingly, Henry got a scholarship to Trinity! After a brief spell back teaching at The Leys, he embarked on a glittering academic career that was to culminate in his becoming President of the Royal Society and receiving the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1936. Dale House is named in his honour.



W H Balgarnie Common Room 1900–30; 1940–46



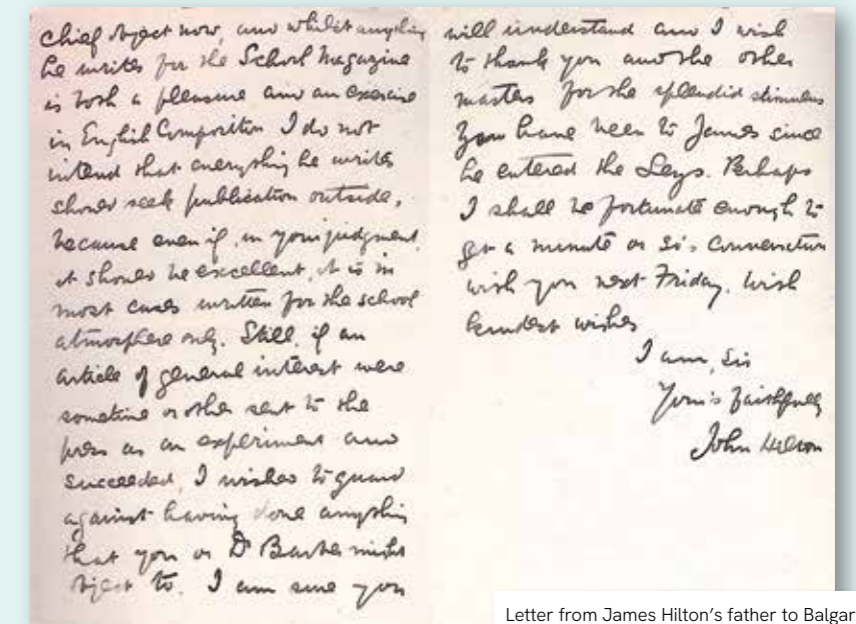
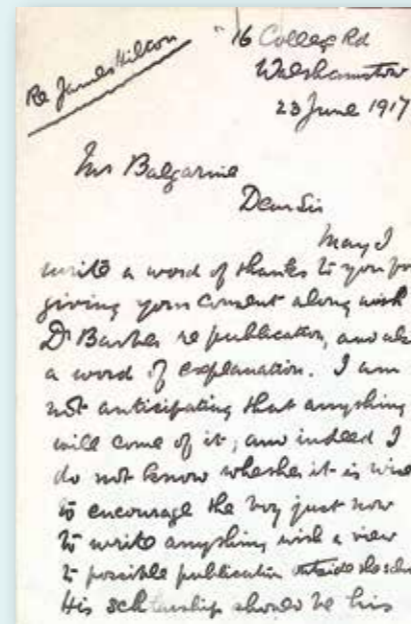
W H Balgarnie at his desk

A young man joined The Leys in 1900 who was to become possibly its most famous master. Balgarnie, whose nickname was 'Uncle', taught Classics until 1930, was Acting

Headmaster in his final year, retired to live in Brookside, and was then summoned back in 1940 to teach at Pitlochry during WWII, retiring again in 1946. He died in 1951. After his first retirement he was well known for inviting all new boys across to Brookside and telling them stories about their fathers (or grandfathers) whom he had known as boys.

However, it was for a contact he made whilst he was President of *The Fortnightly* (the school magazine) during the Great War that he achieved lasting fame. One of its editors was **James Hilton**, School 1915–18, on whom Balgarnie made a lasting impression. In his novel

Goodbye Mr Chips James partially modelled the central character on Balgarnie. He made it clear that Mr Chipping was an amalgam of several masters including **J C Isard**, and his nickname came from another. However, he described Balgarnie as "the chief model of my story". After the war, the novel was turned into a play in the West End. After one performance, to cries of "Author!", James came on stage. He pointed to one of the VIP boxes, and, much to the embarrassment of Balgarnie who was sitting in it, said: "And we have the real Mr Chips here with us tonight."



Letter from James Hilton's father to Balgarnie imploring him to discourage young James from pursuing a career as a writer

1892 Classrooms added above Dining Hall

1893 Science School opened by Lord Kelvin; Museum equipped

1896 Day boys (later Home Boarders) admitted

1900 City Road Mission site purchased

200 pupils on roll in 1892

1894 The first petrol driven automobiles

1895 Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* first performed

1897 Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

Joseph Clark Isard

School 1875-76



Joseph Isard was another of the Original XVI, and the School's first Senior Prefect. He returned after Cambridge to teach. By the 1890s The Leys was in serious financial trouble, known as the Debt Crisis. Leading Methodists had set the School up but had left it with no endowments and little income. It was decided that, now there was a body of old pupils, an alumni society should be established to solicit funds, but also that the School needed proper financial leadership. In 1897, Joseph was appointed the first Bursar of the Old Leysian Union and

helped to save the School. Within a year he was Acting Headmaster, as Dr Moulton died early in 1898 whilst still at the helm. Joseph remained Bursar until 1918, supervising the building of the Chapel, King's Building, the Swimming Pool, the Gymnasium and a new Pavilion. He was subsequently a Governor through the interwar period. He died in 1941. Third headmaster Harry Bisseker said of him: "If there was a touch of greatness in his work, he was even greater in his character. His generosity was incessant ... I have known no man more selfless."

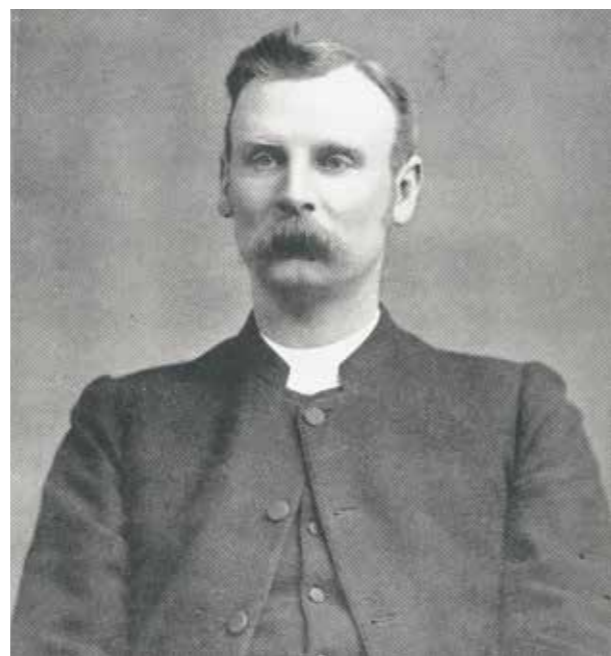


Joseph's legacy lives on at the School today thanks to the continued generosity of the Leysian family, with the aptly named Isard Circle for those who donate £1500 a year or more to bursaries.

William Aquila Barber

The Second Headmaster, 1898-1919

The Revd William Barber taught briefly at the School (1877-78) before becoming a lecturer at Richmond Theological College. From there he went as a missionary to China, becoming minister in charge of Hankow Christian College. He returned on the death of his wife and was staying in Manchester with the Claphams, where he had married Emma, half-sister to the future Sir John Clapham, when he was appointed in 1898. He retired in 1919 and held the post of Provost for a year, but this experiment was abandoned.



Top, L-R: 1885 Lacrosse XII; 1888 Prefects; 1890 Prefects. Second row, L-R: 1908 Bisley team; 1903 whole School. Third row, L-R: 1889 whole School; 1907 Prefects. Bottom: 1893-94 Masters' Common Room

1901–1910



John Boot II West 1901–07 Joseph Arthur Rank North B 1901–06

Many of the early Leysian Methodist families came from Northern manufacturing. Methodism never turned its nose up at 'trade', unlike some Anglican public schools of the time. Most of these manufacturing companies mean little today but one or two are worthy of note, especially two family firms whose sons arrived in 1901. John Boot's father founded Boot's the chemist. John inherited his father's title and became Lord Trent. He was guest speaker on Speech Day in 1935. Joseph Arthur Rank's father was a miller from Hull. During his son's time as

chairman the company would merge to become Rank Hovis MacDougall. Joseph Arthur was a lifelong supporter of the Leysian Mission. He said that he despaired at how poor some of the sermons were that he had to sit through and thought he might spread the gospel more successfully through the cinema. So it was that he set up his own film company. By the middle of the century his was the dominant name in the British film industry. His name lives on through his philanthropy in the J Arthur Rank Foundation. A great niece, **Rachel Rank**, taught at the School from 2002–06.



Arthur Rank Hospice Charity

making every moment count

1901 Cadet Corps established

1905 Foundation Stone of Chapel laid by HRH the Duchess of Albany; Swimming Bath opens; Moulton Scholarships founded

1906 Moulton Memorial Chapel opened

1901 Queen Victoria dies and is succeeded by Edward VII

1908 the Olympic Games open at White City in London

1908 Parliament approves means-tested old age pensions

Joseph 'John' Hunkin OBE



School 1904–06

John came from a Cornish Methodist background to The Leys. He achieved a First in Theology at Cambridge and became a Fellow of Caius. During WWI he served as an army chaplain with great distinction in Gallipoli and France, winning the Military Cross for gallantry. After returning to Caius as Dean, in 1926 he became Chaplain to King George V and in 1935 became Bishop of Truro, a position he held until 1950. He is one of only two Leysians to become a bishop (the other, **Harrington Lees**, North A 1884–89, became Archbishop of Melbourne). John Hunkin's career illustrates the fact that many Methodist Leysians became Anglicans at university. Over the decades, the distinctive Methodist nature of The Leys slowly diminished.

Eric Whelpton



North B 1909–12

Eric was one of seven members of his family over three generations to attend The Leys. He had a successful but unremarkable career as a journalist and teacher. However, whilst at Oxford at the end of WWI he met and fell in love with Dorothy L Sayers. Together they moved to teach in Normandy. It was whilst there that Sayers started to write her detective stories, the first of which, *Whose Body*, was published in 1923. Eric is almost certainly the main model for the character of Lord Peter Wimsey.



The Moulton Memorial Chapel

It was one of Moulton's policies that the School would be part of the Methodist community in Cambridge. To that end he did not want a school chapel and boys worshipped every Sunday at the Methodist chapel in Hills Road (since demolished). However, Revd Barber and the governors wanted to raise numbers and felt that a chapel along the lines of those in Anglican public schools would help to achieve this. Particularly keen was the Vice-Chairman of Governors, Sir George Hayter Chubb, of the locksmith family. What better way of raising funds than to conceive a chapel as the memorial to William Moulton?

The foundation stone was laid by the Duchess of Albany, the widow of Queen Victoria's youngest son and a personal friend of Chubb; it was the first royal visit to the School. The completed building was opened the following year by Hannah Moulton. The carving of pulpit, lectern and pew ends was the work of Chubb himself and one of his daughters. The stained glass is particularly fine. Strangely, the interior bears no similarity to a non-conformist chapel, having all the feel of a High Anglican church. It is an impressive memorial to Dr Moulton but one in which he might have been rather uncomfortable.



Harold 'Jim' Ede North A 1909–12

Harold was a boy who did not fit into the public school mould, as his memoirs make clear. He was highly romantic, with a passion for early Renaissance art. He developed a deep platonic friendship with the wife of one of the masters, "he loved walks and searching for flowers" (he writes his memoirs in the third person), and once presented a master with a bunch of orchids stolen from the Botanic Gardens! Harold's memoirs do not suggest any unhappiness at school which, given their candid nature, is convincing. He enjoyed his lessons, swimming and chapel, "but above all he enjoyed going with a friend far up the river to where the waters were so shallow and the rushes so thick they could go no further"; they would climb onto the bank and "find the lush

fields and gracious willows and the magic world which was theirs". The spirit of the early school of Moulton was not dead even in the more regimented Barber years. Harold was later to marry and his wife thereafter called him 'Jim'. They moved in a world of art, being friends and patrons of Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Alfred Wallis, Christopher Wood, David Jones and Brancusi, and Jim became the great champion of the sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska. He settled in Cambridge after retiring from the Tate and filled his home with their work, which undergraduates were allowed to borrow for their rooms. His home, Kettle's Yard, and its contents were left to the University, becoming an internationally renowned art gallery.

© Courtesy Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge



1911–1920

John 'James' Hilton School 1915–18

James came from a Lancashire Methodist family. During the war, the activities of the OTC, the forerunner of the CCF, became increasingly dominant. However, James disliked military training and refused to join. It might be imagined that he would be ostracised and, possibly, bullied. As he himself testified, nobody persecuted him for his decision. Instead, he pursued an academic and literary course, ending up as Editor of *The Fortnightly* under Balgarnie's watchful eye. Here he suffered no censorship either. As he writes: "the School tolerated me even more generously than I tolerated it". Mention has been made already of *Goodbye Mr Chips*, but that was by no means James Hilton's only literary achievement. Perhaps his greatest novel was *Lost Horizon*, in which he created the mythical Himalayan monastery of Shangri-La, bequeathing the image to the



© Claude Harris

English language. (Visitors to the Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur will find a copy in every room.) Later, James would work as a Hollywood scriptwriter. In a letter to *The Fortnightly* in 1936, he writes that he is working on a movie for Greta Garbo, but would rather be back in Wigan in the rain reading the *Manchester Guardian*. His northern Methodist roots survived the Californian sun.



The Revd Harry Bisseker The Third Headmaster, 1919–34

Revd Bisseker succeeded Barber in 1919. The Governors continued their practice of appointing a Methodist minister to the School. Bisseker had been school Chaplain from 1901–04 and subsequently Chaplain to the Leysian Mission, so he understood The Leys well and was an obvious choice. He was increasingly subject to ill-health and in 1929 the Governors gave him leave of absence for a year whilst Balgarnie acted as Headmaster. However, Bisseker's health gave way again and he retired in 1934. His daughter Ray married **Keith Payne**, School 1923–29, who served as Secretary of The Leysian Mission for over 50 years, from 1935 to 1987.



Class of 1914

The photograph below is of 11 of the 13 School Prefects during summer 1914. Tragically, six of these young men were killed during the war. Those in the photograph are (back row, left to right): **Harold Godfrey**, North B, a Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery who fought in France and Russia; **Gordon Nash**, School, killed in an accident whilst an Instructor in the Royal Flying Corps; **Eric Hickman**, North A, a Reconnaissance Instructor; **William Myles**, School, killed on the Western Front in September 1916; (seated, left to right): **Jack Elmslie**, School, killed at Ypres in March 1915; **Andrew Rees**, North B, reported missing in France in 1918; **Charles Moore**, West, who travelled to Australia on leaving school; **Eric Davies**, North A, a Lieutenant in the Dorset Regiment who fought in the Dardanelles; **Frank Adam**, North A, killed on the Somme in July 1916; (seated, front): **Donald Winnicott**, North B, a Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps who became an eminent academic (left), and **Ivor Lloyd Jones**, West, killed in the battle of Gaza in March 1917.



The School and the Great War

In August 1914 it looked as if the School might need to be evacuated as the Royal Army Medical Corps moved in. However, the emergency never materialised, the RAMC moved elsewhere in Cambridge, and the School started the autumn term only a few days late. Of course, the war did have a real impact: the swimming pool was used by troops, and they trained on the school fields, digging trenches and engaging in bayonet practice. West House was temporarily closed to save heating and lighting costs; pupils left early to join up and virtually no-one went to Cambridge; numbers fell. However, the School limped through successfully. Looming over all this, of course, was the growing toll of Leysian war dead. There are so many stories that might be told and no space to tell them, but, to give one illustration, of the 13 prefects leaving in the summer of 1914, eight were subsequently killed. The full list of the fallen can be easily seen in the fine war memorial on the east end of the Chapel, unveiled in 1922 by the Duke of York, the future King George VI.



1912
Hockey replaces Lacrosse

1914 King George V inaugurates the Library Block (the King's Building); new official Coat of Arms assigned

1916
War Commemoration Scheme implemented

1918
Female Superintendent appointed

1920
Sanatorium opened

1911
the National Insurance Act is passed

1914–18
First World War

1918
Limited numbers of women in the UK are given the vote

1920 Women at the University of Oxford are allowed to receive degrees

189
pupils on roll in 1918

1921–1930



Clarence 'Malcolm' Lowry West 1923–27

The School is rightly proud to have produced three of the most important English writers of the twentieth century. The second was Malcolm Lowry, the youngest of four sons of a cotton trader from Cheshire. Possibly as a reaction to a strict Methodist upbringing, Malcolm was anything but a conformist. After leaving school he became a deck-hand in the Pacific and his novel *Ultramarine* was based on his experiences. Although he subsequently went to Cambridge he was soon on

the other side of the Atlantic, leading an increasingly wild personal life, fuelled by alcohol, his taste for which, contemporaries said, started in pubs in Trumpington Street. He produced only one more novel, in 1947, but that novel was *Under the Volcano*. In the Modern Library's list of the greatest novels of the last century, it was placed at number 11. Balgarnie never had to censor anything James Hilton wrote for *The Fortnightly*. The same could not be said for Malcolm Lowry when he was its editor.



A year after Malcolm Lowry joined The Leys, Freddie Brown arrived, shining out as a great sportsman. He was a tri-colour at The Leys and a Blue for Cricket and Hockey at

Cambridge. He was immediately selected for England on the infamous 'bodyline' tour of Australia in 1932–3; he wasn't selected for a Test, although he did play for England when the team went on to New Zealand. After that his England career appeared to be over except for one home Test against New Zealand in 1937. However, in 1949 he was brought back as Captain against New Zealand, captained England in the last Test in the 'Ramadhan and Valentine' series in 1950 against the West Indies, and then took England to Australia. Although they failed to bring back 'the Ashes' and his captaincy was criticised Freddie himself had a good tour as a player being third in both the batting and bowling averages. He remained as Captain for the South Africa series of 1951 but then retired and became Chairman of Selectors. He recalled himself for the Second Test at Lord's in 1953 against Australia and then dropped himself! That was by no means the end of his cricketing exploits. *Test Match Special* was just starting up on the radio and he joined Norman Yardley as one of the two summarisers, his voice becoming familiar to millions, alongside John Arlott and Rex Alston.

Frederick Richard Brown North A 1924–29

The Japanese Connection

Pupils from overseas have been a familiar sight in the School for decades now, many of them from the Far East. In public schools before the Great War they were almost exclusively from the former Empire and the colonies, and usually these pupils were white. The Leys was unique in being the school of choice for the Japanese nobility; extensive research has failed to explain this and it may just be that it was a school in a university town known in Japan. Be that as it may, between 1887 and 1927 a total of 26 Japanese boys came to The Leys. In the vestry of the Chapel there is a plaque commemorating the names of 14 of these boys who raised money for

the vestry furnishings and chancel stained glass. This Japanese contact resulted in the visit of Crown Prince Hirohito to the School during an

official visit to the University in 1921. In a famous photograph (below) he can be seen inspecting the OTC on the Upper Quad.



Prince Hirohito during his royal visit in 1921

1923 Old Leysian Lodge consecrated; The Leys Endowment Fund established; new Pavilion (War Memorial) opened

1927 New Science buildings opened by Sir J J Thomson; OLFC Jubilee

1927 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is created

1928 all women over 21 in the UK get the vote

1928 Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin

1930 New playing fields purchased at Latham Road

271
pupils on roll in 1930

1931–1940

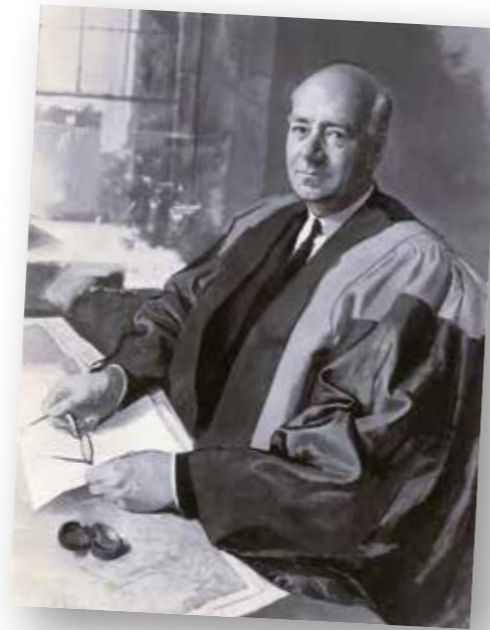


Gerald Humphrey

The Fourth Headmaster, 1934–58

When Bisseker's health failed, the Governors appointed Gerald Humphrey as Headmaster in 1934. This represented a major shift in school policy. Up to now, Heads had been Methodist ministers and, mostly, much older than the Common Room masters. Humphrey was a layman, a scientist, married to a striking American wife, Peggy, and of similar age to most of the masters. This photograph taken by OL and later master 'Jessie' Mellor, North A 1898–1903 would have been unthinkable previously, when Headmasters and their wives had been distant from the staff both in age and metaphorically. Whether by luck or good judgement, the Governors had made an inspired choice. It was Gerald Humphrey who steered

The Leys through its exile in Pitlochry, brought it safely home and, with some inspired appointments in the 1950s, set it on the path to its later success. He is remembered by this writer as a quiet and unassuming man, with much inner strength.



L-R: Trevor Moore, Ronnie (Reg) Brown, Peggy Humphrey and Donald Hughes

Muriel de Vinny

School Secretary 1935–72

So far women have featured very little in this history. Mrs Moulton was arguably behind the scenes and the 'redoubtable' Emma Barber has briefly appeared. We have at least a photograph of Peggy Humphrey but we can at last profile a woman who contributed hugely to The Leys, not as someone's wife but in her own right. Unexpected as it may be, Muriel de Vinny became one of the great pillars of The Leys. When the School was evacuated to Pitlochry, all the staff lived alongside the boys in the Atholl Palace Hotel. Peggy was there by her husband's side but preoccupied with a young son. Muriel, the School Secretary, was also residing. Short of staff, Muriel started to teach the piano and carried on after the return to Cambridge. Generations of boys remember Muriel with great fondness as their piano teacher. It is fitting that there is a music prize in her honour. In Pitlochry, never having married, she developed a platonic relationship with that confirmed bachelor, W H Balgarnie. In the Archive we have the letters he wrote to her after his retirement in his wonderful spidery handwriting. Each starts: 'Dear f.o.w.'; for him she was the 'fairest of women'.



Neil White

North A 1933–39; Common Room 1948–82

William Neil White was the key sporting figure of the 1930s, following in the footsteps of Freddie Brown. He enjoyed an outstanding school sporting career, including captaining the Public Schools Cricket Team that toured Canada in 1939. Neil had a distinguished War, mainly in Burma, and was awarded the Military Cross. Returning to Cambridge after the War, he studied at Trinity Hall and won Blues for Rugby and Hockey but, having been in the Cricket XI for much of the term, was dropped for the

Varsity Match. He joined the Common Room at The Leys in 1948, the same year that he was chosen for the Great Britain Hockey XI at the London Olympics where the team gained silver medals. He retired from the Common Room in 1982, having been Housemaster first of North B and then of the newly built Fen House. He became the most important link to the Leysian families of the pre-war world, and to this day is remembered as an inspiring teacher and 'larger than life' character by countless Old Leysians.

"A great man, true inspiration and later a good friend"

Charlie Kidman, Fen 1963–68

1934 Scout Hut opened by Chief Scout Commissioner

1937 Housemaster's house added to North B; Jubilee of the Leysian Mission

1938 St Faith's Preparatory School acquired by Governors of The Leys

1940–45 School premises requisitioned by the Ministry of Health as a war-time hospital and the School moves to the Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry

1936 Jarrow men march 300 miles to London to highlight poverty and mass unemployment in the north east

1936 Edward VIII abdicates and his brother, Albert, becomes King George VI

1937 Sir Frank Whittle invents the jet engine

1939–45 Second World War

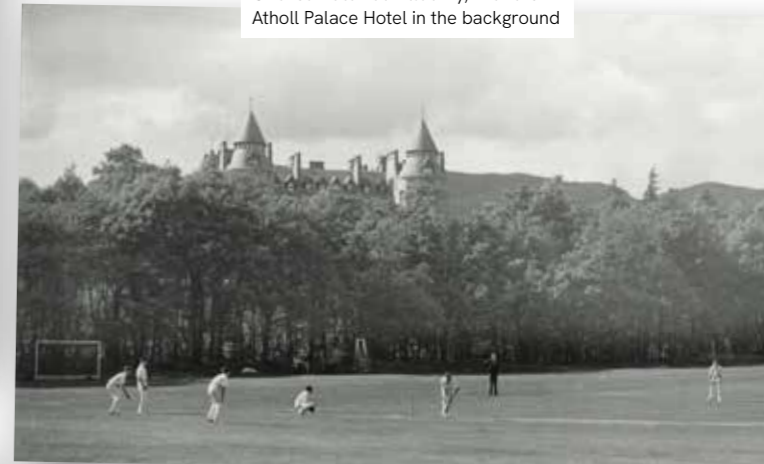
227 pupils on roll in 1937

1941–1950

Pitlochry

The Leys experienced possibly the strangest of all school evacuations during WWII. Initially not anticipating any need to move, the School was suddenly told after the summer term of 1940 that the site would become an auxiliary hospital within three weeks. All potential sites in England had already been used by government departments or other schools. It so happened that the Chairman of Governors was Lord Stamp, who was also Chairman of the LMS Railway Company. The company had recently extended the line from Edinburgh towards Inverness and it had reached Pitlochry, where the company had bought the Atholl Palace Hotel to act as a station hotel. Lord Stamp arranged for The Leys to occupy it. However, the School was also still responsible for the upkeep of the site in Cambridge and for paying all the running costs. Somehow Gerald Humphrey masterminded everything, the move there and back, running the Cambridge site, and attending

Scenes of life in 1940s Pitlochry



Cricket match at Pitlochry, with the Atholl Palace Hotel in the background

Governors' Meetings in London. It was a monumental effort. For five years the School lived in the hotel, masters, boys – and Muriel de Vinny – together. One generation, those boys who came in September 1940 and left during the Christmas holidays of 1945, spent five years at The Leys without ever living in Cambridge.

An extraordinary bond was created between the Pitlochrians which continues to this day among the families of those involved. Many return trips to Pitlochry have been made, including one in 2024 by three OL sons of Pitlochrians: **Stephen Ludlow**, North B 1980–85, **Andrew Holt**, School 1973–78

and **Michael Holden**, Fen 1969–74, who made the very same journey from the School to the Atholl Palace Hotel. A documentary has been made about their experience, echoing the original 1940 film *The Leys Goes North*, footage for which was filmed by Michael's father **Sir Paul Holden**, East 1936–41.

Following in their fathers' footsteps: Michael, Stephen and Andrew (L-R) atop mount Ben Vrackie in Pitlochry



1941–43 The first three female members of teaching staff join the School

1945 48 hour flu sweeps through the School; at one point 50 people are confined to the 'San' (medical centre)

1947 India gains independence from Britain

1948 introduction of the National Health Service

1948 Republic of Ireland Act

1948 Olympic Games at Wembley Stadium in London – FCR and OL Neil White competes

1949 Cairn with indicator on Ben-y-Vrackie, Pitlochry, in memory of 'Years of Exile'

1950 75th anniversary dinner in School Hall; unveiling of War Memorial (1939–45)

303
pupils on roll in 1950

Old Leysians in the Second World War

During WWII, unlike the Great War, Old Leysians were involved in fighting throughout the world. Far fewer were killed, but some of their stories are extraordinary. The following two accounts will have to stand for so many others.

Graham Sell West 1933-38

Graham, the son of the Vicar of Coton, joined the Indian Army and, at the beginning of the War, was in charge of a Jat Regiment in Malaya. When the Japanese invaded the regiment moved on to Singapore Island and dug in in the north. When Singapore subsequently fell they were unaware of what had happened. After discovering that they were behind enemy lines the officers gave the local troops the opportunity to melt into the population but they, and a few of the troops, including Graham, made it to the west coast and then rowed to Sumatra. Graham then got to Ceylon. There the regiment was reconstituted and sent to Burma, where he was killed in action.

1938 West House Guard: Graham is in the middle row, third from left



War memorial at Tarawa



Revd Alfred Sadd West 1923-27

Alfred Sadd was one of three Methodist brothers at The Leys. He left to become a missionary and, when war in the Pacific broke out, was in the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati), which the Japanese captured, rounding up all the Europeans and interning them on Tarawa. After the Australians launched an attack on Tarawa, the Japanese retaliated by killing all the Europeans. While they were lined up, Alfred stepped forward and turned to give the others words of cheer. He then advanced so that he could be the first to be killed. Unsurprisingly, his is the war grave furthest removed from The Leys.



James Ballard North B 1946-49

The School was able to get its site back in the autumn of 1945, in time for the Lent Term to open in Cambridge. Numbers had held up in Scotland and the School was in a healthy state. A new boy that term was James Ballard. His family had been in Shanghai when the Japanese occupied it and they were interned. The Headmaster of the impromptu school set up in the camp happened to be an Old Leysian, the **Revd George Osborn**, North B 1918-24. After liberation, James' parents asked Osborn where they should send their son for the sixth form when they returned to England and he recommended The Leys. James' experiences of growing up in the internment camp were later to provide him with the material for his semi-fictional novel *Empire of the Sun* which established his reputation and was to be made into a highly successful film. It would be the first of many novels by 'J. G. Ballard' as he liked to refer to himself. He writes that he felt distanced from his peers in North B and rather sorry for himself until he happened to see a younger boy's bare arm and saw an Auschwitz tattoo on it, realising there were others harbouring worse memories. The boy was **Reinhard Frank**, 1946-48 who went on to a distinguished academic career in America. So, a single boarding house, North B at The Leys, housed both a survivor from a German extermination camp and one from a Japanese internment camp; surely a unique occurrence.



Civilians in the War and under the Attlee Government



Sir Donald Bailey

Several Old Leysians played significant roles both during the War and in the building of a new Britain under the Attlee administration. **George Greaves**, East 1924-27 was the man responsible for the reconstruction of Coventry after its destruction. **Trevor Stamp**, East 1919-24 was involved in secret research into biological warfare at Porton Down and, after the War, became Professor of Bacteriology at London University. **Sir Donald Bailey**, North B 1916-19 is more famous. It was he who designed a pontoon bridge to be used by the Allies to replace bridges blown up by the Germans during the liberation of Europe. Montgomery later wrote: "Without the Bailey bridge we wouldn't have won the War." After the War **Sir Robert Burrows**, School 1895-1902 joined the National Coal Board following a career in the rail industry, where he produced the report that bears his name into its future organisation.



John Dower North A 1913-19

One contributor to the reconstruction of post-war Britain, John Dower, deserves a section to himself. His career was on the National Parks Committee of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, where he was also involved in footpaths and access to the countryside, and in the provision of youth hostels in the Lake District. In 1945 he produced the White Paper on National Parks. The climax of his work was one of the great achievements of the early Attlee years, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, which introduced the idea of the green belt. His combination of strong idealism and practical wisdom made him an ideal leader of the movement to preserve the country's natural heritage.

It is worth noting that John's son **Michael Dower**, North A 1947-52 followed a similar calling, becoming CEO of the Peak District National Park and Director General of the Countryside Commission.



© Peter Dickinson Estate



Peter Dickinson School 1948-53

On leaving The Leys, Peter won an organ scholarship to Queens' College, Cambridge, where he read Music. He subsequently studied at the Juilliard School of Music in New York before taking up various academic posts in England, culminating in him becoming the first Professor of Music at the University of Keele. He was a specialist in American music, which was a great influence, along with jazz, on his own compositions. Peter became one of the most important British composers of the second half of the 20th century. Following his death in June 2023, the BBC Concert Orchestra performed a special concert of British music at Snape Maltings, including music of Peter's alongside works by Edward Elgar and others, conducted by Barry Wordsworth.



Colin Kinnear East 1949-53

Reflecting on my schooldays, the main benefits I gained were not academic, as I left The Leys after only four years. Post-National Service, I reconnected with **John Philp** (deceased), North A 1949-54, and became Vice Captain of the Old Leysian Football Club. After marrying Brenda in 1967 we moved to Yorkshire for my job at British Oxygen. In 1970, I founded Cryoservice Ltd, relocating its head office to Worcester in 1981 where we still live. We sold the company to Air Products in 2011. In retirement, we established The Bransford Trust and run a community farm. My family remain connected to The Leys, with my son having attended and his children currently at St Faith's. Looking back, I do indeed believe my schooldays influenced many of my life decisions.



John Sully East 1950-53

Father asked, "So what are you going to do now?" I replied, "I would like to be an engineer", but Father had other ideas. "No you won't", he said, "you'll become an auctioneer - they make lots of money!" Two weeks later, I found Mother dead in the kitchen and our lives were turned upside down. I went to Salisbury and studied as a postal student. Unfortunately, I failed the final exam and couldn't get a job, but the course gave me great insights. I started my own building and property businesses and joined the boards of engineering and foundry businesses. I have now sold up and retired to Australia. The Leys gave me a good education, as well as teaching me to become the master of my own destiny and that all things are possible.



1951–1960

The Singapore and Malaysia Connection



Top: Jeffrey Lee
Bottom: Edmund Lee

As we saw earlier, the connection with Japan eventually dwindled, though a Japanese exchange programme is now in place at the School. The Leys had always taken pupils from elsewhere in the world but, by the 1950s, there was no question that overseas pupils were coming predominantly from the Chinese and Malay communities in the newly independent Singapore and Malaysia. This connection has remained very strong to this day, but in recent decades has expanded with pupils from Hong Kong and, more recently, the Republic of China. In particular, two nephews of the first President of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, came to the School in the 1970s, **Edmund Lee**, West 1972–77 and **Jeffrey Lee**, West 1977–82, to be followed by members of their families.



Ken Naylor

Common Room 1953–80

In the early 1950s a new generation of teachers joined the School as many from the 20s and 30s retired. **Colin Wilcockson** would go on to become the first Deputy Head before moving to teach English at Pembroke College, Cambridge. **Stan Whitehead** remained for the rest of his career, also becoming Deputy Head, **David Gardiner** was a Housemaster and Head of Science, and **Eric Southern** Head of Classics. The distinguished Ken Naylor was regarded as the finest musician of his generation at Cambridge. Ken was Director of Music and also a Housemaster. He expanded the public image of school music with combined orchestral and choral concerts with other schools and in the city. He was a brilliant improviser on the piano and organ. He worked with Louis Halsey on choral arrangements for the Louis Halsey Singers. One of his hymn compositions which he entitled *Coe Fen* was composed for the hymn *How Shall I Tell that Majesty*. It was voted the finest hymn tune composed in the twentieth century.

“His music stands for itself but he was also a gifted teacher and encouraged even those who had limited talent.”

Stephen Long, School 1968–72



Rod Ashby-Johnson

School 1957–62

I was fortunate to have been at The Leys under **Alan Barker**, his wife Jean (Baroness Trumpington) and wonderful mentors including **Derek Baker**, **Eric Southern** and particularly **Ken Naylor**. I read Mechanical Sciences at St Catharine's, Cambridge, then worked for GKN Ltd in Eastern Europe before being enticed away to Wellworthy and AE, who became T&N, a global manufacturer of engine and motor components. I have lived an extraordinary life in the USA, Europe, South America and Hong Kong, establishing 13 joint ventures in China. I retired back to Cambridge, became Chair of Governors at The Leys and am proud to have named Great Hall. Perhaps my most significant lifetime achievement was compiling and publishing *Beyond Coe Fen*, the complete manuscripts of Ken Naylor, and its accompanying CD *Echoes of Naylor*.



Martin Bell



Martin Bell OBE

East 1952–56

After two years with the Suffolk Regiment in Cyprus, and gaining a First in English at King's College, I joined the BBC in 1962. Over the next 30 years I covered conflicts all round the world from Northern Ireland to Vietnam, and Angola to the Middle East. I even earned the nickname 'The Man in the White Suit' along the way, thanks to my choice of clothing. I was seriously wounded by shrapnel in Sarajevo in 1992. The British officer who came to my rescue was **Col. Mark Cook** OBE, North B 1956–61, then serving in former Yugoslavia, who subsequently set up the charity 'Hope and Homes for Children'. In 1997, I left the BBC and stood for Parliament successfully as an Independent candidate for Tatton in Cheshire, serving for one term.

Martin's successor was **Dr Richard Taylor**, East 1947–53. The two were the only Independents in Tony Blair's first Parliament. Martin is now a British UNICEF ambassador.



Col. Mark Cook, OBE

1953 Visit by Queen Salote of Tonga

1955 Queen Mother opens new Hall at the Leysian Mission

1957 Appeal launched to raise £100,000 for maintenance and development of School buildings

1959 Swimming Bath rebuilt

1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

1955 Commercial TV starts with the first ITV broadcast

1958 The first Motorway, the M6 Preston bypass, opens

317

pupils on roll in 1955



Alan Barker

The Fifth Headmaster, 1958-75

Gerald Humphrey retired in 1958. In his place, the Governors appointed their first non-Methodist Head. Born in Edinburgh, William Alan Barker was educated at Rossall and was a Scholar of Jesus College, Cambridge. During the war he served in the Royal Artillery until wounded and invalided out. He was a master at Eton from 1947 to 1953 but held a Fellowship at Yale University from 1951-52. From 1953 to 1955 he was a Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, and Director of Studies in History. In 1955 he returned to Eton before becoming Headmaster at The Leys in 1958. During Alan Barker's 17-year tenure the School became a much more liberal institution and saw tremendous improvements in buildings and facilities.

Eric Southern

Common Room 1951-80



“A great, highly eccentric and entertaining Classicist of the old tradition who enabled me to obtain Grade 1 O Level at the age of 14. On reflection, 55 years later it was he who inspired me to re-engage with Latin at the U3AC where I am now in my 5th year!”

David Carpenter, North A 1965-70



Paul Svehlik

North B 1960-65

After participating in the GB Hockey team at the 1972 Munich Olympics, I met Arthur Ashe and became the tour manager for World Championship Tennis (WCT). In 1976, during an event in Lagos, Nigeria, play was halted by a military coup, but we exited safely thanks to the US ambassador. That year I started the ATP European Office in Paris, travelling extensively to attend European tournaments. In 1983, I became the Administrator for Europe of the Men's Tennis Council, and in the 1990s I founded the Estoril Open tennis tournament near Lisbon. I ended my sporting endeavours in Switzerland, taking amateur boxers for the International Olympic Committee to the 2004 Athens Olympics. All the encouragement from my former housemaster, Neil White - himself a 1948 Olympian - had paid off! My story is titled: *From Munich to Athens: a tale of two Olympic cities.*



Derek Baker

Common Room 1956-66

Derek joined the School in 1956 and took over as Head of History. He introduced the study of Medieval History at A Level and set high academic standards, inspiring pupils and producing exceptional results. With Richard Armstrong he set up a Boat Club in 1961 and was coach of the 1st VIII. He also led outward bound trips for the CCF, involving sailing, mountain climbing and pot-holing, and established the Scouts. He was Assistant Housemaster in School House under Ken Naylor, leaving the School in 1966 to become a lecturer at The University of Edinburgh.

“He arrived in a swirl of energy ... At heart, he may have been a scholar but he was, to us older pupils, a companion as well as a teacher: part pied-piper, part Peter Pan.”

S G G Benson, East 1953-58



Derek in the Cairngorms in 1962



Jean Barker

Lady Trumpington

The wives of Headmasters have received but passing note so far, but it would be ridiculous not to give Jean Barker her own profile. Whilst Alan was running The Leys, Jean was pursuing a career in local politics, as a city councillor. She was elected Mayor of Cambridge. The two of them entertained on a lavish scale

and the School was not a dull place under their regime. When Alan moved to London, Jean carried on with her political career. She was given a Life Peerage as Baroness Trumpington and became a Conservative Whip in the House of Lords during the Thatcher years. She was also a Governor of the School. She became something of a national treasure, writing her memoir *Coming Up Trumps*, in which she says that her time in Cambridge was the happiest of her life. The book is full of tales of her larger-than-life escapades. One in particular, which readers took with a pinch of salt, was of her

jumping into the school swimming pool fully dressed when invited to award the House Cup at the end of the swimming sports. This writer, standing less than ten yards away at the time, can confirm its veracity.



Jean and King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga in 1969

David Gardiner

Common Room 1954-90



“David Gardiner was Housemaster of A House while I was at The Leys. He was a highly skilled teacher who made me understand Physics; he was also extremely kind.”

Richard Moon, North A 1963-65

1961–1970



A Stellar Generation

Professor Andrew Briggs, School 1963–67, with additional research by John Harding

In 1963 I was awarded a scholarship to The Leys with what proved to be an amazing cohort of contemporaries, many of whom had minds that were scientifically inclined. They included the sons of two Nobel Laureates. The



Andrew Briggs

Leys provided not only outstanding teaching in maths and science, but also the environment in which we could stimulate each other, both in class and in homework, and stretch our minds beyond the examinable syllabus. **David Edsall** encouraged me to build my first computer (with three-bit memory addressing!) for which I won the W L Wood Prize – I chose the *Feynman Lectures on Physics* which I found gripping then and which I still consult from time to time.

Two of that year were subsequently elected Fellows of The Royal Society: **Robin Perutz FRS**, School 1963–67

went on to a distinguished career in Chemistry at the University of York, and **Robert Mair FRS FREng**, School 1963–67 became Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, and is now The Lord Mair (pun intended).

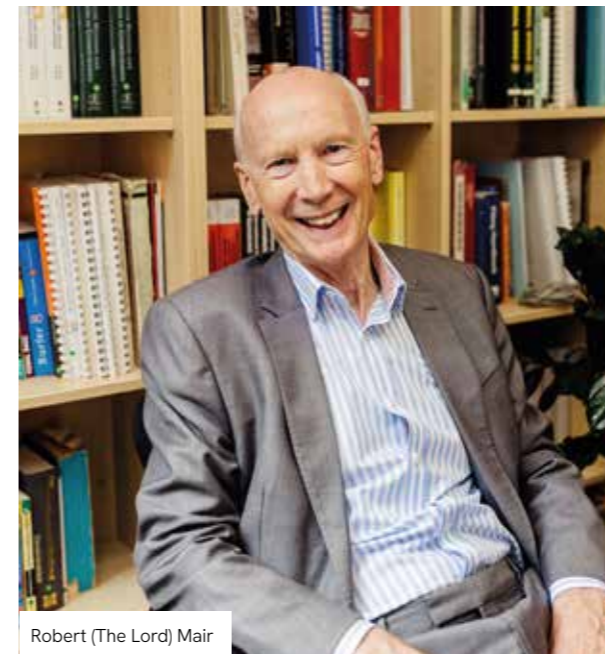
Stewart Huxley, North A 1963–67 founded Huxley Bertram Engineering, which engineered and built the Corpus Clock, one of Cambridge's most famous landmarks. **Paul Perkin**, North B 1963–67 followed a degree in Physics with ordination in the Church of England, where he went on to establish a thriving church in Battersea. **Richard Chapman**,

North B 1963–68 was a brilliant mathematician in our year who became a leading actuary. I was elected the inaugural Statutory Professor of Nanomaterials at Oxford, and served as Director of the first UK national collaboration in Quantum Information Processing, which helped to lay the foundation for what is now a multi-billion pound national quantum endeavour.

From The Leys I learned not only to value academic excellence, but also the importance of engaging with all the dimensions of what it means for humans to flourish. Alongside a specialist scientific monograph, my other books include: *The Penultimate Curiosity: How Science Swims in the Slipstream of Ultimate Questions*, for which there is a documentary film and a six-book series for children;



Shooting Club, 1967. Middle row: Robert Mair (second from left), Stewart Huxley (middle with cup) and Roger Keynes (far right)



Robert (The Lord) Mair

It Keeps Me Seeking: The Invitation from Science, Philosophy and Religion; and *Human Flourishing: Scientific Insight and Spiritual Wisdom in Uncertain Times* (winning an ISSR prize in 2023).

Our near successors in subsequent years included the neuroscientist **Roger Keynes**, School 1964–68 and his brother **Simon Keynes FBA**, School 1965–69, Professor of Anglo-Saxon History, both Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. **Sir Andrew Wiles FRS**, North A 1966–70 read Mathematics at Cambridge and specialised in number theory at Princeton and Oxford. Having been fascinated all his life by Fermat's Last Theorem, in 1995 he at last provided proof of it, being knighted and elected as Oxford's first ever Regius Professor of Mathematics. Many of us shared a Cambridge childhood, and I have a personal joy that no fewer than six of the people named here had been taught maths by my mother, Mary Briggs, in preparation for coming to The Leys. It was an inspirational generation.

1961 Queen Mother opens new West House; old West House adapted to become a sanatorium

358
pupils on roll
in 1961

1963 Doctor Who premieres on BBC television

1964 Appeal launched to raise £200,000 to build a new boarding house, theatre/assembly hall and music school. 200 contributors raise more than half the total in three months.

1965 1923 Pavilion demolished; foundation stone of new Pavilion laid by O L F R Brown

1966 England wins the World Cup

1968 Boat house built in collaboration with King's, Selwyn and Churchill Colleges

1969 Concorde makes its maiden flight

1970 Film created on the making of *The Leys Fortnightly*

408
pupils on roll
in 1970



David became a Cambridge Double Blue (1969 and 1970) and continues to row in retirement



David Cruttenden

West 1961-66

Five years of excellent teaching undoubtedly gave me a sound education, but my highlights at The Leys were the wide range of extracurricular activities and sports. Rowing and Arduous Training/ Exploring Society stand out, the names of **Richard Armstrong** and **Derek Baker** looming large. Expeditions to the Cairngorms and the Swiss Alps were especially enjoyable and challenging. The Boat Club, in its infancy, had a sense of great energy and ambition. An absolute duffer at hockey and cricket, I had four seasons on the river including rowing in the first crew from The Leys to row at Henley, contributing to later rowing successes. Much of my career was spent in Zimbabwe, in road transport then as a non-executive company director and an arbitrator. Returning to Cambridge has reconnected me with the school to which I owe so much.



Robin Rogers

School 1966-70

I retired to France, near Cognac (no surprise there), reanimating the underappreciated intense French teaching of **Dickie Bennett** and **Richard Armstrong** - can't undervalue. I dream in two languages. Life is less competitive than in the lovely Cotswolds, hunting/countryside, where we brought up our two daughters, now London, world their oyster etc.

I did do shows (theatre) - thank you **Steve Siddall** - Cambridge Footlights, Europe, Edinburgh Festival, USA with Oxford and Cambridge Shakespeare, one West End show! - but thought Accountancy more 'grown-up' (Touche Ross).

'Headhunting' for thirty years - round Europe, lived in Sydney, covered Asia, Russell Reynolds - always choose quality colleagues. The Leys gave me 'belief in yourself at the next stage' (**Colin Wilcockson**), deep core in all music (**Ken Naylor**), the link to Cambridge and the highest standards.



Richard Armstrong: 'Strong'

Common Room 1959-90

Richard Armstrong joined the School in 1959 to teach French and also Russian as a sixth form option. He started as Assistant Housemaster in North B under **Neil White** and then moved to School House under **Ken Naylor**. With **Derek Baker** he set up the Boat Club in 1961 and was its President. He was involved in the Scouts,

running camps and expeditions in the Lake District, Snowdonia and North West Scotland. He led trips abroad, three times to Russia, to the Alps, the Pyrenees and Sicily. He also ran the Clapham Society for local history. Generations of pupils were introduced to the mountains and had their lives transformed by his inspiration, his love of the



countryside and the natural world, and his curiosity. He retired in 1990, but still organised regular reunions for Old Leysians to the mountains of the Northwest Highlands.

"Leysian legend who rescued my group from certain hypothermia or worse on a Queen's scout trek across Dartmoor in foul weather, took the same group potholing in Derbyshire and the Mendips in his convertible Morris 1000, made me listen to French news on the radio which I never understood, could hum for Britain and gave me a dose of self-confidence for life."

Robert Thomas, School 1964-69

Christopher 'Kip' Gresham

Fen 1965-69

Kip was a pioneering printmaker who collaborated with leading British and international artists throughout his career. He founded the Manchester Print Workshop in 1975 and later established the Chilford Hall Press in Cambridge. Kip developed True-Grain, a significant innovation in screen-printing technology, and worked with renowned artists including Elisabeth Frink and Eduardo Paolozzi. In 1994, he founded the Gresham Studio, producing notable portfolios for institutions such as

Jesus College and the Freud Museum. Despite battling auto-immune disease, he continued his work at The Print Studio, Cambridge. Kip's contributions to printmaking are widely recognised, and his work is archived at the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Kassam Mochary Foundation. He passed away on 23 May 2024.

Abridged from Kip's obituary in The Guardian, written by Professor Loraine Gelthorpe and shared with her kind permission





Christopher Hitchens

North B 1962-66

Christopher attended Balliol College, Oxford and became a journalist. He started in England, where he wrote for the *New Statesman*, but soon moved to the USA, where he wrote for *The Nation* and was an editor for *Vanity Fair*. He became well-known for his left-wing views. In 2007 he wrote the highly influential book *God Is Not Great*, in which he makes a case against organised religion. He also penned critical biographies of Mother Theresa, Bill Clinton and Henry Kissinger. In total, Christopher wrote 18 books on faith, culture, politics and literature.

Colin Wilcockson
Common Room 1959-73

Colin joined The Leys in 1959. He found a kindred academic spirit in Headmaster **Alan Barker**, who appointed him Head of English (Senior English Master as it was termed then) and later, additionally, Deputy Headmaster. He was an officer in the CCF and had very fond memories of going on CCF camps with **Stan Whitehead** and **David Gardiner**, but his particular interest was full-bore shooting, and he coached the 1st VIII Shooting team for many years. Colin was an all-round schoolmaster. He gave of his time generously to all his pupils, pastorally and academically. But it was his love for English literature which absorbed him intellectually and he wanted all his pupils to feel the same whether it was the lowest set or Oxbridge high-flyers. Colin always felt an affection for The Leys; he was proud to be the Common Room's representative Governor for many years.

From Colin's obituary in OL News, kindly supplied by Michael Wilcockson.

"He was light years ahead of the game."

Colin Hargreaves, West 1961-66



James Cockeram

Fen 1968-73

I'm one of seven of my family to have attended The Leys, including my father **Eric, East 1938-41** who was at Pitlochry for part of the War. I excelled more at sport than in the classroom. After gaining a Business Studies degree, I had short spells at Unilever and Charles Letts Publishing before joining the Drinks trade, ultimately becoming MD and Président of Moët Hennessy Europe in 2000. The greatest gift the School seeded and developed was my ability to appreciate people for who they are, whilst respecting their views and differences. This translated into major leadership roles, not least being responsible for around 2000 people across 50+ European countries. Given Dad's leadership throughout his remarkable life, I created 'The Cockeram Leadership Award' at The Leys in his memory.

Andrew Lane
North A 1969-74

Manchester University student and member of staff, Lighting Designer, Manager of Theatre Company then trained as classical singer at RNCM. Sung all over the world including being the first opera singer to give recitals in Kathmandu. Highlights were the Proms and many years at Glyndebourne and ENO. Currently visiting artist in performance skills at Trinity College London.

Perhaps my biggest achievement recently has been to take on cancer and win (at the moment). This requires a lot of focus on staying fit and meeting trouble head on - a skill I learned at The Leys and which has been my mantra ever since. Added to this is the desire to be a team player and a good colleague and friend; further skills nurtured at the School.



Andrew in *Tales of Hoffmann* with the ENO



Martin Firth
East 1968-73

After a very short stint attempting Aeronautical Engineering at The University of Manchester I gained a Business Studies degree at Bradford University and then qualified as an ACA with Deloittes. I then decided to use my qualification to travel and moved to Deloittes in Durban, South Africa in 1982. There, I met and married my wife, Margie, whose family owned a farm in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains, and I was persuaded to change careers to farming in 1986 which I have been doing ever since! We farm maize, beef and sheep, live in a scenically beautiful part of the country and have been fortunate enough to travel around most of Southern Africa.



Rajah Nazrin Shah

School 1970-75

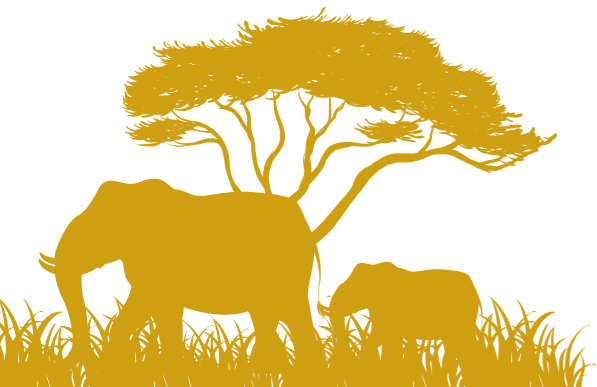
After The Leys, Nazrin read History at Worcester College, Oxford. He has a Doctorate from Harvard in Political Economy and Government, and honorary degrees from around the world. He has written the definitive economic history of Malaysia and more widely on economic issues in developing countries. He is also a prominent global figure in interfaith dialogue. In 2014 he succeeded his father as the 35th Sultan of Perak and in 2016 was elected Deputy King of Malaysia. There are two further royal Old Leysians: the current Sheikh of Bahrain, **Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa**, West 1965-66 spent a year at the School; and Prince **Aho Tukuaho**, North B 1973-77 is the King of Tonga.



Further royalty at The Leys: 1963 Prince Philip DofE Inspection



Photos on stage/actors in costume from the 1968 production of A Penny for a Song by John Whiting





Support Staff, 1923

A REMARKABLE TEAM



These pages are dedicated to the memory of our much-loved colleague Graham Chapman, School Porter, who passed away on 12 March 2025.

Margaret Collen, Domestic Cleaner and House Supervisor: 50 years' service

Margaret joined The Leys in 1971 when she came to help her mother and father-in-law who worked as cleaners in West House. Born and raised in Cambridge, she had been a hairdresser but found the flexible hours at The Leys fitted in with

family life. She went on to become a Domestic Cleaner, working more than 23 years in West House before moving across to Dale House, becoming a House Supervisor and remaining there for a further 27 years. Margaret saw many changes in the School as it evolved under the leadership of several Heads and became co-educational. House refurbishments and the availability of modern cleaning equipment made working conditions easier. Margaret, however, never changed her approach: "I just got on with my job, I am always busy - I am that kind of person."

Adapted from article in LeysLife, Winter Term 2021



Margaret Collen



Alfred Haggis, Groundsman and Head Gardener: 61 years' service

Alfred joined The Leys as a Garden Boy in 1908, his first job being sweeping leaves - a task which he joked remained unfinished at his retirement 61 years later. In 1908 only the Chapel and Gymnasium Block had electric light. The Playing Field had a pavilion and a cinder running track. Classrooms were heated by open coal fires, which were lit by naked gas jets. In his memoirs, Alfred expresses a certain nostalgia for the rural setting and the simpler conditions experienced by pupils during those times. He also talks of the impact of both World Wars on

the School, and describes ploughing two and a half acres of Latham Road Field in order to sow and plant vegetables in 1940 - to benefit others, it turned out, as the School was evacuated to Pitlochry soon afterwards. In 1960, having passed retirement age, Alfred was persuaded to continue working part-time, and saw the building of Fen House, as well as a new theatre and pavilion. He eventually retired in 1969, and concludes his memoirs with a fond reflection: "May there always be leaves at The Leys and always someone to sweep them up."

In the 1923 photograph on p40, Alfred is 7th from left in the back row



Josie Finnelli, Seamstress: over 40 years' service

Josie joined The Leys at the tender age of 15, following - like Margaret - in the footsteps of her parents who both worked in the kitchens. She started work in the Dining Hall but changed direction when her talent as a seamstress came to light. She made everything from aprons to oven cloths. Her flair for curtain-making undoubtedly saved the School a small fortune: she made every curtain in Fen House when it was refurbished!



Josie Finnelli (left) with Graham's wife Freda (middle) and Sharon Spaxman. Sharon recently retired after a 25-year career at The Leys, culminating in the role of Events Manager

"By all means, recall the influence of a favourite teacher or an omnipresent iconic member of the Common Room who inspired you, but then think a little more about the collective. Maybe one of those characterful derided eccentrics left a deeper impression, or that persistent tutor who ensured you scraped a 'C' in a necessary but to you uninteresting subject. Then, beyond that hallowed Common Room there was, and still is, a remarkable team including grounds staff, maintenance staff, cleaners, porters, caterers, medical staff, those who run the School Shop, the Bursary and other administrative departments. And don't forget your peers or that helpful Senior Prefect. They are all key to the uniqueness of The Leys.

Did I say "they"? I meant "we", because you too left your mark."

Richard Pattison, North A 1975-80



1971–1980



Richard Pattison North A 1975–80

After school, I became a soldier and developed a passion for Antarctic expeditions. Life is now dominated by old boats and volunteering.

I also drank a lot of tea. Cowering under fire from an insurgent (or superior). Chai and sand in the desert. Shivering in a blizzard on Antarctica's uncrossed Forbidden Plateau. Unwinding from the intensity of another psychiatric counselling. In the drawing room of Clarence House. Surging through mountainous seas off Cape Horn. Cold, wet, red-eyed and

grimy in a trench. Feeling blessed watching a mountain sunset or rise. A taste of comforting normality mourning fallen comrades. (Xaipe)te at an OL reunion.

And now, most mornings, planning the day and reflecting on an incomplete eclectic journey of remarkable experiences whose foundation was painstakingly laid 50 years ago, and which has mellowed the character my contemporaries might remember.

Fancy a cuppa, anyone?



Bertie Bellis The Sixth Headmaster, 1975–86

When Alan Barker left the School in 1975 the Governors chose a Methodist, Bertie Bellis, to replace him. Bertie came from Edinburgh where he had masterminded the amalgamation of two of its schools. Under his leadership, the School went through a period of retrenchment during a time of national economic difficulty. By far the most important development was the decision to admit girls into the Sixth Form; this took place in 1984 and Bertie steered it through with a minimum of fuss and with complete success. He retired in 1986.



C. Mark Ridgway OBE West 1975–80

CEO, Group Rhodes Limited

"Focus on your strengths", stressed **Michael Lang**, Master responsible for Athletics. I recalled his words when pulling on my first international vest at university, and later when joining my father in the acquisition of an advanced engineering company.

Retraining resulted in a higher degree and a scholarship to a North American business school, where the importance of 'social capital' was hammered home.

The company evolved and invitations were accepted to join Government advisory boards, head UK trade missions, chair trade associations and mix sport with business as the UK's trade sector lead for the London Olympic Games.

The subsequent OBE, the Honorary Doctorates and the DL appointment were never sought but gratefully received. And Mike Lang's words still provide guidance, even though the miles now hurt much more!



Steve with the cast of *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1969



© Photo courtesy of Julian Bowler, East 1969–74



Stephen Siddall Common Room 1965–2003

Steve taught English, taking over from **Colin Wilcockson** as Head of Department in 1973 until his retirement, establishing a formidable reputation as a teacher and for securing outstanding examination and Oxbridge results. Outside the classroom he quickly established Drama as the leading creative art in the School. He came to be regarded as perhaps the finest director working in the independent sector. Shakespeare was always central to his work but

modern drama was by no means ignored. Many a pupil is grateful for the experience of being directed by Steve. Alongside The Leys, he directed a company of leading amateur actors in Cambridge, putting on an annual play at the Arts Theatre. He was a talented cricketer and spent many years coaching and playing for the Common Room XI. On retirement Steve continued to teach and direct plays, as well as becoming a Governor in 2005.

"His Shakespeare analysis was truly inspirational and taught me so much about humanity."

Nicholas Ullmann, East 1964–68

1973 Queen Mother unveils a plaque on the new Classroom Block (the Queen's Building)

1975 Centenary celebrations, including dinner for Old Leysians in the Guildhall, Cambridge

1978 The Bisseker Room and Chaplain's Flat are opened at 6 Brookside

1980 New Careers Room opened by Lady Armitage

422
pupils on roll
in 1975

1971 Decimalised currency replaces 'pounds, shillings and pence'

1973 Britain joins the European Economic Community

1978 World's first test-tube baby is born in Oldham

1979 Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first female prime minister



Paul Wilmshurst Fen 1975-80

Studied English Literature at Churchill College, Cambridge; then journalism at City University in London. Have worked in television ever since. First news, later documentary, now drama. Highlights: writing and directing films about child abuse, runaways and Hiroshima; also alcoholism, drug dealing, gambling; working with Germaine Greer, Frank Skinner and Darcus Howe; hanging out on a US aircraft carrier, meeting the Las Vegas mafia, rolling with the Dice Man, climbing the cables of the Brooklyn Bridge; filming *Doctor Who* in a Lanzarote volcano, *Strike Back* in Cape Town and Zagreb, a biblical epic in Morocco, the finale of *Indian Summers* in Penang and - in Budapest - 17th century Jamestown colonisers, an ice battle for *The Last Kingdom* and - most recently - billionaires, spies and assassins in *The Day of the Jackal*.



Peter Lacey Common Room 1974-92

I was appointed to the Mathematics department in 1973 and found the School friendly and positive, influenced by its Methodist roots, with a strong emphasis on sport and CCF. I coached rugby, rowing and cricket, and enjoyed the sense of community, including being a House Tutor in Fen. As Housemaster of East, my wife Naomi and I had two young children in tow, a third being born during our tenure. Those 14 years were very happy. We felt valued as members of the Leysian family and enjoyed returning for reunions, though sadly I missed the Centenary dinner due to emergency dental surgery. My time at The Leys prepared me for my own Headship in 1992, and I later served as a Governor for 12 years, reconnecting with former pupils and colleagues. The Leys' location in Cambridge and its foundation contribute to its success and unique atmosphere. Long may it be cherished.



Peter and Naomi

“Kept me on the straight and narrow through brilliant intuitive pastoral care.”

Nick Pearce, East 1984-89



Khai Sing Lam North B 1980-85

As a Senior Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon based in London, Khai helped establish the internationally renowned Spinal Unit at Guy's and St Thomas'. His work has been covered by more than 100 published scientific papers and presentations, both nationally and internationally. Khai performed the first robotically assisted spinal surgery in the UK



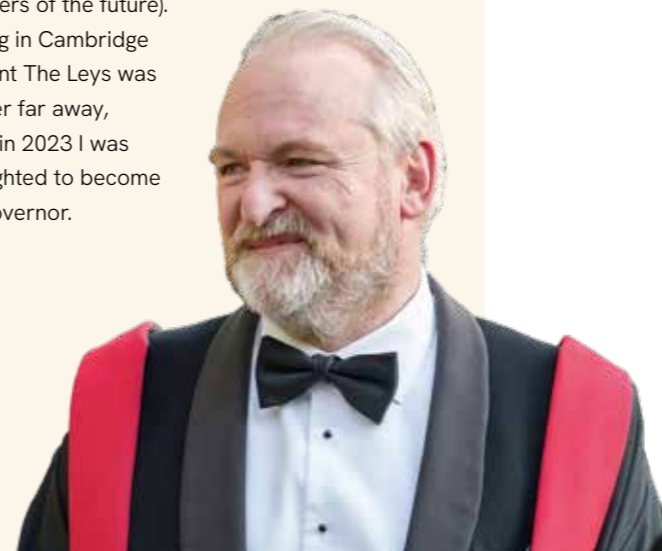
using the ExcelsiusGPS Robotic Navigation System, a game changer for patients with spinal conditions. This technology raised the bar for minimally invasive surgery capabilities to provide improved accuracy, reduced procedure

times - so less time under general anaesthetic - lower complication rates and shorter recovery times. Sadly, Khai passed away in 2021 aged just 55, but his groundbreaking work continues to improve the lives of many patients.



Richard Anthony West 1980-85

On leaving The Leys, I read History at the University of Edinburgh, stayed on to do a PhD, decided I didn't want to be an academic and then trained as an accountant in London. I worked in corporate finance for a time and ran a family office, ending up as a consultant at a private bank. Having returned to live near Cambridge, I successfully applied for the bursarship at St Edmund's College Cambridge in 2010, becoming Bursar of Jesus College in 2017. It is exciting to work with world-leading academics and very bright students (the global leaders of the future). Being in Cambridge meant The Leys was never far away, and in 2023 I was delighted to become a Governor.



Tom Petch West 1979-84

I left The Leys to read Business Studies, then served eight years in the British Army, with roles including tank commander, adjutant and Troop Commander of 22 SAS. I led intelligence-gathering missions on the Khmer Rouge. In 1997 I transitioned to film production, founding my own company. My debut film, *The Patrol*, a drama set in Afghanistan, won the Raindance Film Festival. Recently, I published a bestselling non-fiction book, *Speed. Aggression. Surprise. The untold secret origins of the SAS*. My creativity was inspired by my art master at The Leys, **John Dillistone**, who had a unique perspective. On one memorable trip to the Tate in London, he convinced us that a pile of rubble was modern art - until he walked off and we realised it was from building work.





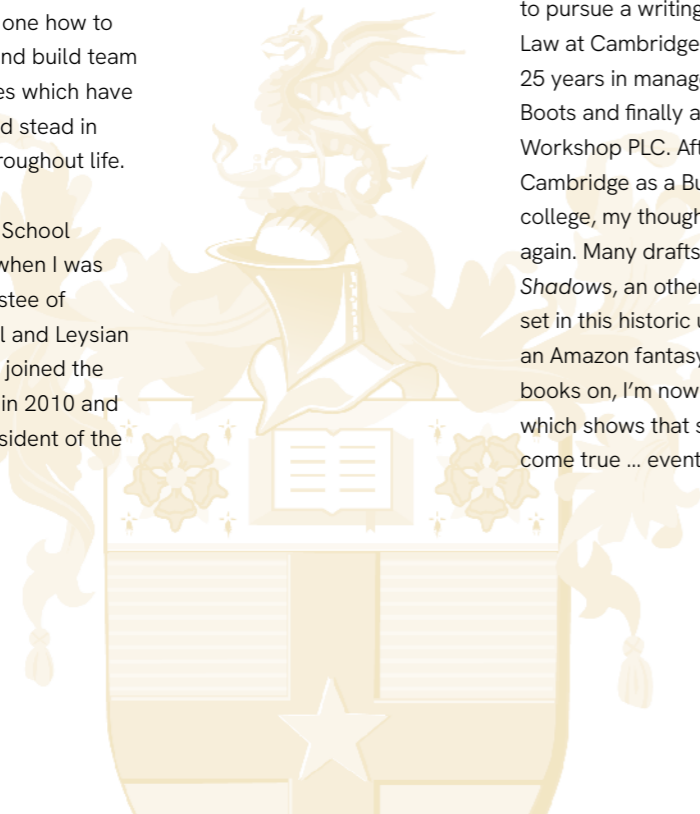
Stephen Ludlow North B 1980-85



After The Leys I took a Business Studies degree at Roehampton, an industry related Master's in Land Management at Reading and latterly an MBA at Imperial College London. On graduating from Roehampton, I bought and successfully grew a small London property business into market leading firm Ludlow Thompson Ltd, before exiting in 2023.

Senior CR Master **Neil White**, 1948-82 bestowed on us that, beyond the classroom, The Leys taught one how to "communicate and build team spirit" - attributes which have stood me in good stead in business and throughout life.

My link with the School was reaffirmed when I was appointed a Trustee of Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission in 2004, joined the OLS Committee in 2010 and was elected President of the OLS for 2025.



Mark Wells
Fen 1975-80

Every good tale has twists and turns - mine is no exception. At The Leys, I'd always enjoyed reading the fantasy works of Tolkien, C S Lewis and Stephen King. I'd even penned a few short stories for *The Fortnightly*. However, lacking the confidence to pursue a writing career, I read Law at Cambridge. I then spent 25 years in management at Next, Boots and finally as CEO of Games Workshop PLC. After returning to Cambridge as a Bursar of my old college, my thoughts turned to writing again. Many drafts later, *College of Shadows*, an otherworldly mystery set in this historic university, became an Amazon fantasy bestseller. Three books on, I'm now a full-time author, which shows that some dreams do come true ... eventually.



Peter 'Beastie' Marshall

Common Room 1960-89

"Someone who inspired, entertained and educated us rather idle and unruly Botany and Zoology A Level pupils, who against all the odds actually passed the exams and went on to a variety of careers - some even quite successful."

John Bates, School 1963-68



David Rapley West 1978-83

David is a distinguished property entrepreneur and angel investor. After completing a BSc (Hons) in Building Surveying at the University of Reading, he qualified as a chartered surveyor in London and became a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Building Engineers.

David founded and led successful property development companies, including Camstead Homes and Rheebridge, developing numerous residential and

commercial projects across eight counties, with over 30 in Cambridge city centre.

He has held various directorships, including in health technology, and actively supports the local community and numerous charities. He is a keen advocate of the arts, sitting as a Trustee of The Cambridge Arts Theatre as well as many healthcare initiatives, and was a generous benefactor of both The Leys School Bursary Campaign and Great Hall.



Peter Chamberlain Common Room 1964-97

Caroline and I arrived back from an Exchange year to a school in Cape Town, South Africa into West House where we spent 15 happy years during my time as Housemaster. The highlight was probably being presented to the Queen Mother when she visited West House. When we left I was Master i/c Cricket

with **David Gibson**, the Cricket professional, and we took a good side to the Garfield Sobers Trophy competition in Barbados. Another highlight of my time at The Leys, in 1968, was to accompany **Richard Armstrong** and 12 boys to Russia. I drove the Scout van and Richard drove his Morris 1000. We started in

Leningrad and headed south to Sochi and Odessa. Here we caught the ferry to Brindisi and drove back through Italy and France, camping all the way.



"Peter Chamberlain's teaching, though excellent, is not what I remember him for most. It is that he was the nicest, kindest, fairest and most thoughtful housemaster any of us could have ever hoped for. Mrs Chamberlain (Caroline to us all now) also made us feel that West House was our home from home."

Robert Norfolk, West 1970-75



The Faireys: a Leysian Family History

Over nearly 50 years collectively, 11 members of the Fairey family across three generations have attended The Leys.

The first was **Chris, North B 1952-56**, who then pursued a career in farming and served as a Governor for 30 years, also chairing the St Faith's Committee. **David, North B 1954-58** represented England in hockey and played for Cambridgeshire County Cricket where he was captain from 1968-75, later becoming its Chairman. **Peter, North B 1958-62** also entered farming and still maintains close friendships with Old Leysians. **Robert, West 1975-80** works as a land agent and previously chaired the Old Fidelian Committee.

Julia, Granta 1984-86 was among the first 'Granta Girls' at the School. **Charles, West 1979-84** runs a farming business, has served as a Governor of The Leys and St Faith's Schools Foundation since 2019, and is married to **Joanna (née Pearson), Common Room 1992-2000**. **Michael, West 1981-86** leads a farming business and recalls his time at The Leys as the best five years in Cambridge with a great bunch of friends. **Tom, East 1989-94** pursued a career in leisure facility development. **Henry, Bisseker 2009-14** earned a

Master's in Mechanical Engineering from Bristol and now works in the robotics industry. **Edward, Bisseker 2011-16** graduated from Durham and is now in finance, also co-organising the popular Tommy Dann Rugby Match between Old Leysians and Old Perseans. **Richard, Barrett 2015-19** is training to become a Chartered Surveyor after completing his degree at Exeter.

Throughout their years at The Leys, they created cherished memories and forged lifelong friendships.



The Fairey family at the Old Leysian Society Annual Dinner in 2021. Front row L-R: Peter (brother of Chris), Robert, Chris (father of Robert, Julia and Charles), David, Julia, Charles. Back row L-R: Edward (son of Robert), Henry (son of Robert), Michael (son of David), Thomas (son of Peter)



1980s fun: spot anyone you recognise?

1981–1990



James Calder OBE

North A 1981–86

The Leys provided an environment to develop confidence without arrogance. I took time out from training in medicine, serving in the military with infantry regiments as a reservist then as a full-time soldier. The Leys also helped me develop my passion for sport and, although not particularly talented, it drove my career as a sports orthopaedic surgeon setting up the Fortius Clinic in London and developing

the sports injury research lab as Professor, Department of Bioengineering, Imperial College. Support from friends and colleagues enabled me to pursue various activities in NHS England, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and as a military advisor on global humanitarian issues. Although The Leys has moved into the 21st century I hope its ethos has not changed from when the first girls joined us in the Lower Sixth!

Sir Matthew Rycroft CBE

North B 1981–86

Matthew is currently Chair of The Leys & St Faith's Schools Foundation, which brings him back to the schools at least once per term.

After The Leys and university he joined the Foreign Office where he enjoyed postings to Paris, Washington and Sarajevo as British Ambassador, and New York as British Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Matthew then became Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Development. Since 2020, for his sins (he says!), he has been Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

He is married with three daughters. Thanks to The Leys, he learned the double bass and has maintained an interest in music, as well as plenty of sports that he wasn't very good at during his school days.



Lawrence Tsang Fen 1982–87



Variety has been a key word in my career to date. I began 30 years ago as a management trainee at Unilever, which took me from the UK to Ireland, The Netherlands, South Africa, Indonesia and eventually Hong Kong. I gained a uniquely global view of the business world, and all my roles since have been regional or global. My finance training gave me the flexibility to move into different industries including chemicals, law and real estate. In 2022 I finally started up my own NGO, helping under-resourced youths find career paths true to their interests and passions. Not surprising when my peers from Fen House include a doctor, a lawyer, businessmen and two film directors! Maybe I've now found my calling – let's see; so much still to do!



Roberto Ruju

Fen 1983–88

I read Engineering at Cambridge and began my career in London at a multinational strategy consulting company. I obtained an MBA at Stanford Business School, where I met my wife, Dawn. We moved to Spain for eight years and had two children there. While there, I joined a mobile advertising startup and then Microsoft. We returned to the UK when I joined another startup; I then joined Google, where I remained for 13 years. I am currently Vice President of Advertising Platforms for a data analytics company. I have many fond memories of The Leys, especially being inspired by **Mr Houghton** and **Dr Gidden** to love science for the sake of learning, and by **Dr Moseley** to appreciate the value of a well-rounded education.



1982 Computer Laboratory opened by Secretary of State for Industry, Patrick Jenkin

1984 First girls' boarding house (Granta) opens in former maids' quarters

1985 Pitlochry reunion to celebrate 40 years since the return from Scotland; Sir Percy Rugg (OL) lays foundation stone of the Rugg Centre; rugby tour (first overseas tour in decades)

1987 School buildings are finally connected to city water supply, meaning school well no longer used

1989 Second girls' boarding house (Dale) opens in the former School House building; number of girls: 53

1990 Hockey tour of USA and Canada

1982 Falklands War

1984 Miners' strike over pit closures begins

402
pupils on roll
in 1985

1989 Sir Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web



The Granta Girls

In 1984 the School admitted girls for the first time, initially only into the Sixth Form – a common move among independent schools at the time.

Granta House opened with 16 girls. Very wisely, Bertie Bellis and the Governors decided that the new house should be in the centre of the School to enable proper integration, although this meant moving the oldest house, School House, out of its original building. **Heather Stewart** was the first Housemistress, seeing in the first two years before moving on. 10 years later girls were introduced into the Lower School as The Leys became fully co-educational.

“I think it is a great reflection on the success of our time at The Leys that almost all of us from that first intake are still in touch. We have a group WhatsApp chat which we regularly use and were in touch a lot during Covid providing great support to one another. The time that

we shared at The Leys has bonded us in a way that is very special. We have not travelled our lives side by side, we were not necessarily at each other’s weddings or there to welcome the birth of a child, celebrate a promotion at work and so on – but we absolutely are there for each other. One of our cohort, **Helen Pring**, left us too soon and this was a sadness felt by all; she is always remembered. For the rest of us, I am happy to report that we are planning our next get together in 2025.”

Vicky Cheseldene-Culley, on behalf of the Granta girls 1984-86

Here is a selection of profiles from that original cohort of girls and those who started the following year.



Helen and Robert back in Coton (top), and on their wedding day at The Leys with Geoff Houghton, Common Room 1957-2003



Helen Sherwood Granta 1984-86

I felt I ought to pen a few words, not least because **Robert Bleeheh**, East 81-86 and I were the first OLS to marry in 1994 (31 years ago now!)

We have both pursued medical careers, I as a GP and Robert as a consultant radiologist. We moved to Cardiff in 1996 supposedly for five years but ended up staying until 2024. We have two daughters, who have both followed us into medicine. As they enter the workforce in our stead, I have taken early retirement and Robert is now semi-retired.

We have very recently moved back to Coton and are looking forward to a happy and fulfilling retirement together, back where it all started.

Vicky Cheseldene-Culley

Granta 1984-86



I have travelled a very nomadic path. After university in Sheffield I settled into a successful career in recruitment consultancy and ran my own business before selling my share and moving to adventures new in Australia. I have lived and worked in four countries and 14 different towns, and now have dual Australian/UK citizenship.

I married an RAF fast jet navigator and we have been together for 30 years, currently residing at a base in Cyprus. We have four children and four grandchildren, one in the UK and three in Tasmania.

I’m looking forward to retirement in three years, at which point we will split our time between South East Queensland, where we have a house by the coast, and the UK. I can’t wait!



Tamara Hunt Granta 1985-87

Without a shadow of a doubt, my time at The Leys was the best platform into adult life that I could have wished for: the University of Manchester; then living in London and Los Angeles, working in journalism, film and television. Since 2008, motherhood has meant working closer to home, where I now live in Suffolk – freelance journalism, coaching and mentoring and owning an estate agency. I am married with a daughter and a son. My daughter, Ismene, is currently studying for her GCSEs at The Leys and is in Fen House.



Tamara with daughter Ismene



Caroline Meikle Granta 1984-86

I was the wee lassie from Scotland, known as Tiggie. My two years at The Leys were among the best of my life. I left with A grades in Maths, Physics and Chemistry, and my sporting accolade of being the first female cox for the first XIII. I studied Architecture at Newcastle University, gaining a First. My thesis was nominated for the RIBA President’s Silver Medal. I achieved my professional architect status two years later and worked for a year in Bangkok, before returning to London and, later, Scotland. My career peaked in 2022 with the completion of the Tillicoultry Quarries HQ. Today my focus is energy conservation on the Isle of Mull, where I live with my husband Garry and our rugby-loving son, Max.





The Granta Girls

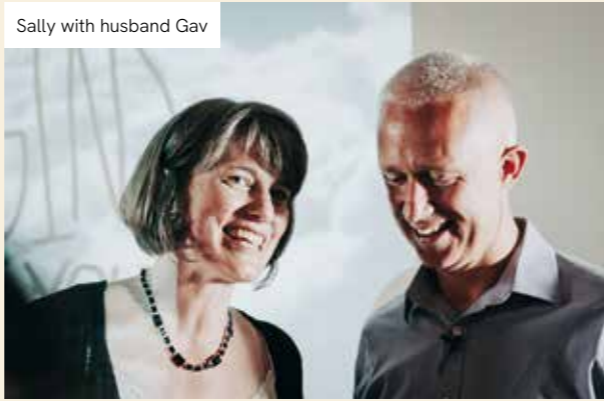


Sophie Milner Granta 1985-87

After leaving The Leys and studying English and Land Economy at the University of Cambridge, I qualified as a Rural Practice Chartered Surveyor and had a long and happy career with the National Trust in Derbyshire and the Lake District, and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group in Angus, Scotland. Covid put paid to this, and I am now self-employed, splitting my time between Harmony Works, a project which will turn a Grade II* listed building into a new centre for music in my hometown of Sheffield, and environmental consultancy/project management. I'm married with two boys aged 18 and 15. Possibly the least sporty kid in school, I am now a keen runner, rock climber and scuba diver!



Sally with husband Gav



Sally Murray Granta 1985-87

I had a great time at The Leys! I've spent 30 years as a physiotherapist which I have absolutely loved, but six years ago had a change of direction. My husband and I started a charity in Derby creating employment for people who have suffered trauma from modern slavery. The charity is called Just Ice and we make our own artisan ice cream so we can support, encourage, upskill and journey with individuals on their road to recovery. I now do a lot of speaking about the horror of slavery and am very grateful for the number of public speaking opportunities I was given at The Leys whilst I was there. If anyone is interested in knowing more the website is www.just-ice.org.



Tim Beynon The Seventh Headmaster, 1986-90

To replace Bertie Bellis, in 1986 the Governors appointed Tim Beynon, a mathematician who had been Headmaster of Denstone College in Staffordshire. Denstone, a Woodard school, had become co-educational during his time there. Tim read Mathematics and Mechanical Sciences at King's College, Cambridge. After completing his PGCE he taught Mathematics at the City of London School and Merchant Taylors' School, becoming a Housemaster and Senior Master before moving to Denstone College. He had an easy-going informal approach which was much appreciated by the pupils and by many members of staff. His tenure was comparatively brief but saw improvements in A Level results and increased numbers of girls in Sixth Form, facilitated by building conversions. Tim returned to the north Midlands where he ran a nature reserve and became President of the British Dragonfly Society.



Anna McMahon née Fourie Granta 1987-89



I knew The Leys was for me as soon as I saw it! My two years there broadened my horizons and introduced me to lifelong friends. After university, I worked in events at the RIBA, then transitioned to recruitment and never looked back. My passion for sailing has taken me across multiple oceans, and embracing a community-focused lifestyle has enabled me to live in the US, Australia and Singapore. I raised my son as a 'liveaboard' and was able to encourage other women to learn to sail. I joined Microsoft, embracing their "come as you are, do what you love" culture. They supported my relocation to Portugal, where I live today and work as a career coach, empowering others to take the road less travelled.



Alex Wong Fen 1986-91

After seven years at St Faith's and The Leys, Alex was enlisted for military service in Singapore for two years. He was then back in the UK and completed his LLB at Queen Mary College, London before being called as a barrister (Middle Temple) in 1997. Alex qualified for the Singapore bar in 1999 and started work there as a litigator but later found his calling as a

solicitor working in energy and infrastructure projects. He was the office managing partner of an international law firm based in Singapore before being called to the High Court bench as a Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court of Singapore in 2023. Alex is married with three children (all boys), one of whom is currently at The Leys.



Alex with his three boys



Charles Moseley

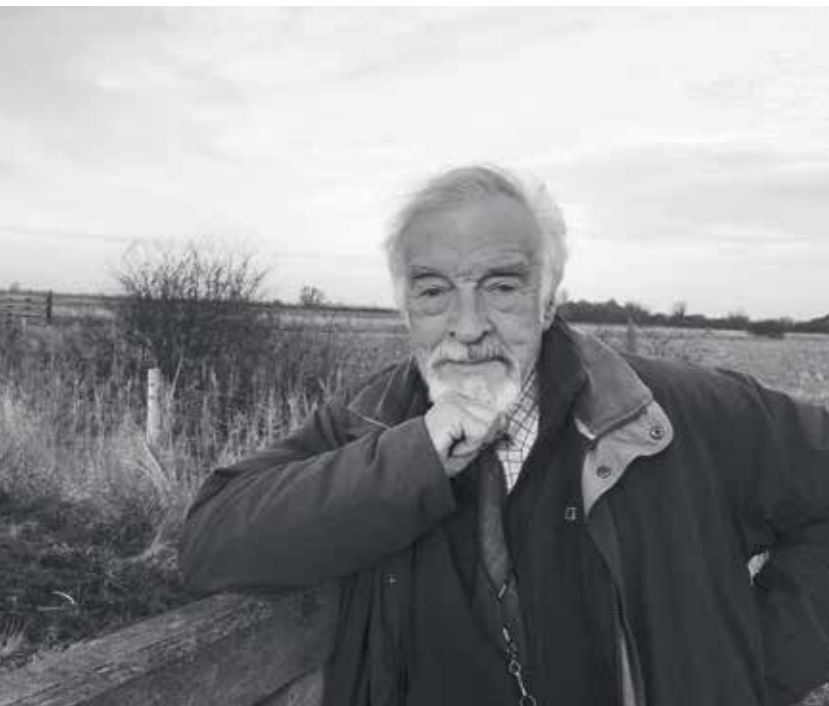
Common Room 1973-96

I came to The Leys after 10 years in the book trade. The pace of school life was quite a shock to the system, but by the end of the first term I was enjoying myself so much that I said to one of my former referees, "I can't think why they are paying me!" (He suggested I did not say that too loudly.) I loved my subjects - English and Latin -

and I made so many long-term friends among my pupils. I owe them a lot. When I moved on to be fully in the University, I was proud of my connection to The Leys, which taught me so much about the joy as well as the sheer hard work of teaching. I would not have missed those years, or those people, for the world.

"Fiercely clever, warmly approachable. Like a wise woodpecker with a twinkle in his eye."

Christy Hawkins, West 1991-96



Jean Harding

Common Room 1977-2002

I joined The Leys as temporary Head of Economics, teaching 35 out of 36 periods to 65 pupils. I resumed this post in 1984 until I retired in 2002. The first female full-time teacher, I was an Assistant Tutor in East and then in Granta where I focused pupils on setting short- and long-term goals. My interest in industrial liaison resulted in two industry conferences. Small group active learning became characteristic of my academic teaching, relationships courses at all levels, and staff development. I helped run sailing, oversaw fencing, and contributed to DofE. Meanwhile I helped to introduce pupil induction, staff induction and staff appraisal. After retirement, I served for eight years as Common Room representative on the Governing Body. I was then asked to remain a Governor with special responsibility for being alongside members of the school support staff.

"Jean was instrumental in raising the status of women in the classroom and the Common Room. Here was a person who was well respected by her students and her colleagues ... a tremendous support to many."

John Aylmer, Common Room 1976-2009

Alastair MacGregor



Common Room 1977-2008

Teaching Chemistry, Fen House and the 3rd XV were major components of my life for my first 15 years at The Leys. The involvement of parents in all three areas, through receptions and on the touchline, meant I was working with the whole family and that was a great joy. As the time to leave Fen approached I was afraid that life would never be as good again.

However, my appointment as the School's first Registrar provided a rewarding new direction and for the next 15 years prospective families were the centre of my life just as current families had been in the first 15.

Retirement has given me the opportunity to travel, often catching up with OLs, their parents and the next generation.



Alastair with former Head of Fen House Lawrence Tsang, 1982-87 at Speech Day 2022

"My housemaster in Fen, celebrating our victories and tolerating our disporting moments, and a good friend since. Alastair always made time to keep in contact with me, and all OLs in East and South-East Asia. That contact is a big reason my son is presently enrolled and thriving at The Leys."

Alex Wong, Fen 1986-91



Revd Dr John Barrett

The Eighth Head, 1990-2004

It was a period of expansion and change, promoting Methodist-based education. Sally and I loved the Headmaster's house, though hadn't anticipated spending our first three months in a hotel, while the house was rewired and the central heating upgraded.

Pupil numbers were low; recruitment was an immediate priority. The ending of boarding at St Faith's made it even more

important to build relationships with other feeder schools. The move to full co-education also helped recruitment, but remaining a boys' school with a few girls would have been unsatisfactory for both girls and boys.

New facilities included the Sports Hall, the astro-turf, Dale House, the Clapham Building and the Music School.

The decisions to open Moulton House and convert North B to accommodate 'Day Pupils' were both controversial but have, I think, proved necessary developments.

It was a very happy and very rewarding 14 years!



John (right) with Ninth Head Mark Slater (middle) and Tenth Head Martin Priestley



Andy Erby Common Room 1981-2016

"He built my confidence year on year and took me from an awkward teenager to an engaged learner. The only prizes I ever received were Head's Commendations from Mr Erby."

Gus Barraclough, North A 1996-2001

"He loved maths and had enormous patience with those who didn't."

Nick Boldero, North A 1984-89

1991–2000

Tom Williams West 1993–96

Tom fondly remembers hours spent in West House, pool cue in one hand, toast in the other, leading to accusations of a mis-spent youth – particularly after beating his housemaster **Mr Erby!**

He achieved a first class honours degree at the University of Southampton before becoming a BBC radio reporter. He's now Look East's Chief Sports Presenter, anchors their flagship 1830 BBC1 programme and

features regularly on network programmes. He has reported on some of the world's biggest sporting events from some of sport's greatest venues.

A keen golfer, Tom captains the Gog Magog Scratch Team and is the new OLGs captain. For 25 years he's represented the School in the annual Halford Hewitt tournament. Tom is married with twins, and his daughter is currently in Dale House.



Lucy Sales Moulton/Dale 2000–07

After reading Theology at the University of Nottingham, I began working in the pharmaceutical industry, starting in clinical trials but eventually forging a career in Governance, Risk & Compliance. Currently a Risk & Compliance Director with AstraZeneca in Cambridge, I have tried to use my corporate experience to benefit my local community.

I hold non-exec roles on audit committees for Cambridgeshire and Norfolk constabularies but perhaps the most rewarding role I have undertaken is becoming a Governor of The Leys & St Faith's Schools Foundation in 2022. As a member of the Old Leysian Society Committee and Secretary to the Old Leysian Benevolent Fund, I wanted to help shape the experience of future pupils to ensure they come away from their time at The Leys with memories as happy as mine.



Sabrina (Biba) Brown née Tunnicliffe Fen 1996–2001

Having left The Leys in 2001, following a gap year I joined Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge and read History. In addition, I played a lot of hockey and was awarded a Blue. Once graduated I moved to London and worked for the executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles. Seven years ago, I set up my own firm.

I married Rowan in the Leys Chapel in 2011 and **Dr Barrett** took the service. We have had two children, Cara and Max.

I had such a happy time at The Leys and was taught by wonderful and inspiring teachers who gave me the confidence to keep challenging myself. The friendships I made will be lifelong.



John Harding Common Room 1968–2005

I joined the Common Room in 1968 to teach History and take over the Medieval History A Level course. In 1972 I became Head of History. I was Assistant Housemaster in West under **Dick Bennett** and **Peter Chamberlain**, and then in 1976 became Housemaster of School House until 1987. I was involved in Drama, both as actor and director, ran the Debating Society (the Lit) and the Orpheus and helped with the Clapham Society and the Field Club. I joined the Scouts and took part in camps and expeditions all over the British Isles and also in Europe. When I was in charge of the Scouts

I oversaw its transformation into the Duke of Edinburgh Award. I was involved in coaching and umpiring Hockey my whole career and was in charge of the 1st XI in 1974 and 1975. After retiring from School House, I became President of *The Fortnightly*, Higher Education Advisor, President of the Common Room and a member of the Senior Management Team. I am particularly proud of my ten years as a Chief Examiner in A Level History for the Oxford and Cambridge Exam Board. I retired from teaching in 2005, by which time I was Secretary of the Old Leysian Union. I helped its transformation into the Old Leysian Society and was part of the team which established a permanent Development Office for the first time. I continued to work in the Office until 2017, when I had almost reached 50 years' service in the School.

“His inspirational teaching of medieval history engendered in me a life-long obsession with the past, how to understand it, and see it as part of who we are.”

George Gordon, Fen 1969–74, Sothebys



1992 Rugby tour of Australia; development campaign started with new Sports Hall as first project

1994 The Leys becomes fully co-educational

1995 Sports Hall opened by the Duchess of Kent; Mrs C White opens the Neil White Memorial all-weather surface

424
pupils on roll
in 1995

1997 Introduction of Day pupils in addition to Home Boarders and Boarders; girls' hockey tour to Boston, USA

1998 Moulton House for year 7 and 8 pupils opens in Brookside

465
pupils on roll
in 1998

2000 125th anniversary; publication of *Well-regulated Minds and Improper Moments* by Geoff and Pat Houghton; first Assynt camp reunion

1994 The first women priests are ordained by the Church of England

1994 The Channel Tunnel officially opens

1997 Handover of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty

2000 Tate Modern opens in the re-designed Bankside Power Station



Adam Rhys Dee School 1992-97

2024 has been a huge year for me because I had the honour of going to Hollywood to receive The EGA Hermes Award for 'Best Voice Actor in an Animated Series'.

Voice acting has given me a highly successful career where I'm heard - but never seen - in TV dramas, films and adverts, and I'm in the enviable position of never having been out of work.

A current advert is "I was born in Blyth, but I was made in the Royal Navy" when the truth is I was born in Newcastle but I was discovered by The Leys School who developed a talent I never knew I had at a time when drama was not a mainstream subject in most schools.

Thank you.



Rowland Adamson

Common Room 1989-Current

My plan was to stay three years. What happened? I discovered The Leys is a special place, welcoming, friendly, and inclusive with highly engaging pupils. Every single Leysian wants to succeed, which fires me up. I cannot see that ever disappearing. Consequently, it is a highly fulfilling time, be it in the Thomson Building, on the Astro or the cricket square or establishing East as a Sixth Form Boys' House. Houses are where you truly get to know Leysians. Late night chats on the stairs were often therapeutic for

them and me. Five European hockey tours and 21 years of Science study tours to Canada have been a highlight. They will forever live with me and hopefully with some OLs too. I am grateful to each of four Headmasters for enabling me to stay challenged and fresh. Each new venture has been enriching and rewarding, with years of working with the most supportive colleagues. I have loved giving time and energy to successive Leysian generations. Upon leaving, they are well-rounded people ready to follow John Wesley's Rule of Life for as long as ever they can.

"A wonderful teacher, doing extraordinary things, creating balanced human beings."

Eric Thom, North B 1996-01, Energy & Carbon Specialist



Michael Wilcockson



West 1972-77; Common Room 1986-96

"Loved to play devil's advocate to stoke the conversation and debate. Set high expectations and received phenomenal results. A major impact on me during my time at The Leys and the reason for my decision to read Philosophy at university."

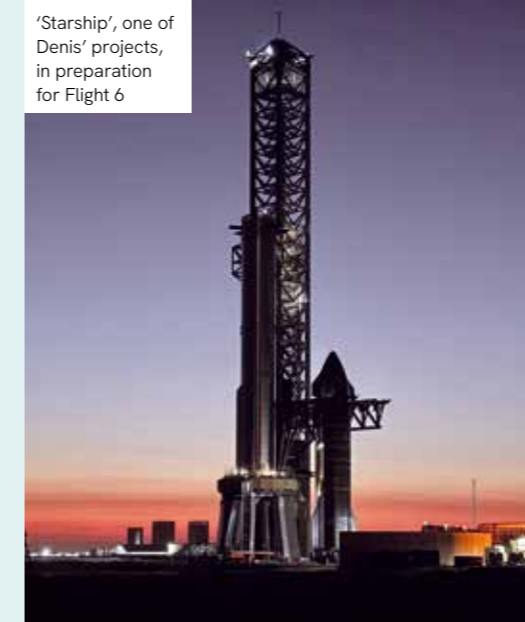
Matthew Graves, East 1993-97

Denis Trofimov



West 1995-2000

I have 15 years' experience in spacecraft design as an Aerospace Engineer. Currently, I serve as a Senior Engineer at SpaceX, focusing on power and energy systems. I work on designing next-generation spacecraft and the Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, aimed at making humanity an interplanetary species. My career has spanned NASA and the private sector, involving launch vehicles (both unmanned and crewed), low Earth orbit, geostationary communications, and deep space spacecraft. At Apple, Inc., I spent three years in technical leadership, specialising in lithium-ion battery design for the iPhone, Watch, and various accessories. My education at The Leys provided a solid foundation and the vision to pursue my dreams of space, equipping me with the tools to solve the most challenging problems.



'Starship', one of Denis' projects, in preparation for Flight 6



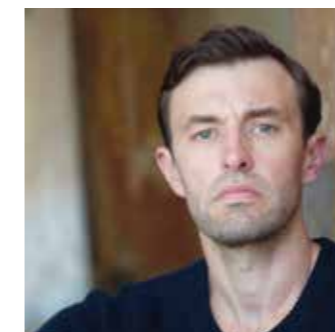
Simon Cooper

North A 1993-98

My time at The Leys was hugely enjoyable and afforded me the opportunity to participate in activities that ultimately have shaped my life and career. Passionate about golf, I was allowed to play on Wednesday afternoons in the Sixth Form rather than do DofE, developing my playing level to the point at which I turned professional and played on a development tour in 2004. During this time I met my business partner, and in 2005 we founded Precision Golf. Our company, now regarded as the best in its field in Europe, fits and builds bespoke golf equipment for players ranging from amateurs to top European tour players and major winners. Without the School's support in pursuing my passion, this may never have happened.



Benjamin Dilloway School 1998-2003



Ben trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) under the tutelage of Peter James. He was cast as the lead in Peter's final show, *The Libertine* by Stephen Jefferies. Since then Ben has been fortunate enough to carve himself a career on both stage and screen, performing on the West End as well as at the National Theatre, Almeida theatre, Regent's Park, and

many other London and regional venues. Alongside theatrical roles, he has worked consistently in TV and film, with some of the finest actors in the business, at locations around the globe.

Ben says: "The tenacity and etiquette cultivated during my time at The Leys has been invaluable throughout my journey so far."



David Bartram

West 1997-2002

After leaving the Leys and graduating from university, I began my career at McKinsey & Company. I soon started looking to a career with purpose, and in doing so exploring the gap between traditional charitable models and for-profit businesses. I have since spent the past 12 years working with and supporting purpose-driven entrepreneurs and organisations.

I am currently a Director at UnLtd - the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs - where part of my role is running a social investment fund investing in purpose-driven organisations. There is real momentum in how businesses can not just limit the harm they cause in society, but focus on positively contributing towards it.

The Leys will always be a big part of my life and in shaping who I am today.



Ania Morrison

Dale 1996-2001



I have a Bachelor's in Mechatronics, a post-grad in Human Rights, extra credits in Peace and Development Studies and

a Master's in Philosophy. I am mother to four boys, translate books and love making things, especially out of wood.

Having been given so many possibilities at The Leys, I developed a wide range of interests. During that time I was inspired to follow my dreams, and often it has been the friends I have made who nudged me back on that path. It is thanks to one of these friends that, in 2022, I started evacuating people from war zones and also providing aid to the most affected areas. I now oversee a humanitarian foundation, hoping to be able to continue helping those in need.



Nick Wilde

Common Room 1972-2000

“For inexplicable reasons, he made me Drama Editor of *The Fortnightly*, giving me my first taste of writing about theatre. I continued to do it for 30 years, including a decade as the *Independent's* theatre critic for the West of England. I've seen a lot of plays, and written a lot of words, as a result of Mr Wilde seeing something which even I did not know was there.”

Toby Morse, Fen 1978-83



Sagan Daniels

School House 1998-2003

I work in inclusion and alternative education across youth, community and club roles in sports, youth and the charity sector. I founded the Rugby Black List awards and am currently the Programmes Director for KORI Youth Charity. Much of my time is spent supporting antiracism in independent schools, serving as a Church Mission Trustee at Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission, and coaching at my children's rugby and hockey clubs.

Based in Northeast London, post The Leys and a stint at Drama School, I volunteered at Saracens FC, later becoming a rugby inclusion officer and holding various positions with England Rugby, including Community Rugby Coach and Club Developer. Today, I continue to deliver antiracism training at The Leys and beyond, engaging with those working towards removing barriers to participation.

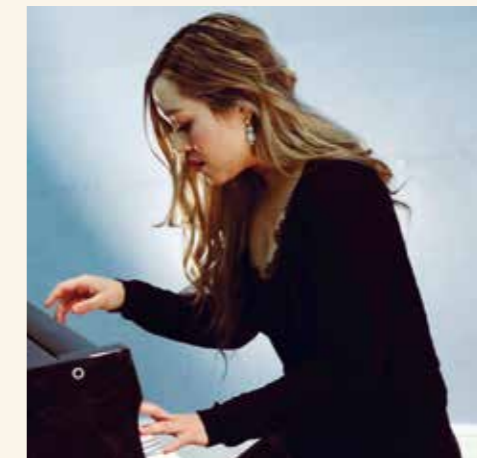


Victoria Royce

Fen 2000-05

Victoria was at St Faith's before moving up to The Leys as a music scholar. At St Faith's she performed for the Duke of Edinburgh, and at The Leys, she performed with Julian Lloyd-Webber. Whilst at The Leys Victoria attended the Royal College of Music Junior department and, in her final year, was awarded first prize in their annual piano competition. She went on to study at the Royal College of Music as a scholar, earning a BMus and Master's in performance with distinction. Victoria is an accomplished soloist, chamber musician, accompanist and teacher. As a professional ballet pianist, you will also find her in ballet studios and companies. Victoria splits her time

between London and Cambridge, is on the Old Fidelian Committee, and makes time to support alumni events at The Leys.





Moulton House

The introduction of girls into the lower forms created a problem. Traditionally boys in the independent system moved at 13; girls usually at 11. It was decided that there needed to be an intake at age 11 to ensure girls wouldn't be discouraged from choosing The Leys. This would also allow boys and girls from the state sector to transfer as they left primary school. So, in 1998, Moulton House opened in 6 Brookside for Years 7 and 8, who would then transfer to the main houses. **Caroline Wiedermann**, Head of Classics, became the first Housemistress, assisted by **Alyson Macpherson** as Matron. Alyson, aka 'Miss Mac', took over as Housemistress and only retired in 2024.

Caroline Wiedermann Common Room 1982-84 & 1995-2017



place with the girls well-established. Then **John Barrett** asked me to run a new venture: Moulton House – a co-ed day and boarding House operating within the main school grounds, with Brookside for the boarders. We spent a year setting it up including appointing a Matron, the excellent Alyson Macpherson. The House very quickly settled down with the children settling in fast. Two years of slightly different daily and weekly patterns laid the foundations for a pretty easy onward transition to the senior Houses, and it has been very gratifying to watch Moultonites do so well over the years.

I started when The Leys was still a boys' school – rather daunting for a young female graduate both in the classroom and the Common Room! But I stuck at it, even becoming the first female resident Assistant HsM in West House. When I returned in September 1995 to take over as Head of Classics the School was a very different

“Caroline worked quietly and efficiently behind the scenes and had a big influence on many things such as summer uniform, boys' attitudes towards women and girls, acceptance of 'difference' and many more.”

Andy Erby, Common Room 1981-2016



Alyson 'Miss Mac' Macpherson Common Room 1998-2024

We started with 23 Year 7s in 1998, nine of them boarders. They were joined by four Year 8 boarders who were educated at St Faith's. Caroline and I worked to create a homely, supportive atmosphere for the younger pupils. From the beginning I was involved in girls' games for Moulton, coaching under 15 Netball teams. It was a privilege to work with Caroline and help set up the routines to ensure Moultonites were supported within the School, whilst helping them become independent and ready for the move into the senior Houses.

I became Housemistress in 2004 when Caroline moved on from Moulton, then stepped down from the netball to start the famous Miss Mac's Fitness. There were many heated arguments over the years over whose fitness regimes were toughest between the boys and girls.

I really enjoyed my time at The Leys and got so much pleasure from seeing pupils develop confidence, and supporting them to achieve their potential.

“Miss Mac meant so much to me ... a stable and reliable figure while I moved around in my home life due to being in a military family. She was always there with a firm hug, words of encouragement and her famous rocky road.”

Charlotte Smith, Moulton/Dale 2011-18



2001–2010



Ollie Silverton School 2005–10

After reading Sport at Durham University I won a competition dubbed 'The Best Job in the World,' which took me to Brazil as a reporter for TitanBet at the 2014 FIFA World Cup. In 2015, I founded *The Rugby Pod*, which quickly became the world's leading rugby podcast. I then secured the 'Ultimate Apprentice' role through a global campaign by GMR Marketing, travelling worldwide for a year to present at major sports and entertainment events.

I've split my time between the UK and Australia for the past two decades. In 2017, I produced viral golf content for the European Tour in London, and in 2021 became a senior sport producer at Stan in Australia, focusing on rugby union. I currently run two weekly shows: *The KOKO Show* and *Club Prairie Fire*.



Mark Slater

The Ninth Head, 2004–13

I feel immensely grateful to have rounded off my career at this wonderful school, and proud to have played some part in its evolution over the last 150 years: proud that Great Hall was completed in my time as Head; that we carried out a major refurbishment of all Houses; that the Sports Hall was enhanced with a splendid cricket pavilion; that a new astro turf pitch was put in; that the numbers on roll increased; that academic standards continued to rise; and that sporting success abounded (winning the Daily Mail Plate Final at Twickenham being perhaps the highlight among many).

But, above all, I feel proud and privileged to have belonged to a happy school where friendliness, inclusivity, kindness and generosity of spirit seemed to pervade the entire community: pupils, staff, parents, alumni and governors. It is indeed a special place.



Mark (centre) with Tenth Head Martin Priestley (left) and OL Liam McKeown, West 2008–13



Alex Gray

Moulton/Dale 2007–14

The Leys provided invaluable support for pursuing diverse interests, hobbies and skills, unlike many schools of its calibre that focus purely on academics. The passion from teachers across the departments encouraged pupils to flourish in all areas of life. Although I did well academically and went on to study Psychology at UCL, my heart always belonged to the realm of performing. The Leys affirmed that academic pursuits and "serious" office jobs weren't the only paths in life. This mindset carried forwards with me and I now perform for a living, having presented for Red Bull, Hyundai and Formula E, and starred on a hit BBC show! My early education at The Leys made this possible, and for that, I am eternally grateful.



Hannah Silverton Fen 2003–08

After leaving school I embarked on a 10,000-mile adventure to The University of Sydney to study English Literature and Philosophy. The appeal of studying for a degree on the beach and getting a ferry to lectures was too tempting! Nearly 16 years later, after boomeranging between the hemispheres, I'm still here, having settled in a beautiful pocket of the world called Byron Bay with my young family.

Since 2022, I've been working at Canva as a Creative Copywriter. Prior to that, I clocked up a decade of invaluable experiences across advertising, magazine publishing and brand strategy.

The Leys played an integral role in my early confidence, has been the source of countless lifelong friendships, and was incredibly supportive of pursuing paths less trodden - all of which I'm eternally grateful for.

Hannah (second from right, holding daughter Sadie) with Georges Fraulo, West 2003–08 (far right), Hannah's husband Nick, Elle McAlpine, Moulton/Dale 2002–08, and Georges and Elle's daughter Roberta



2003 Duke of Edinburgh formally opens Clapham Building

2005 New Music School opened by Julian Lloyd-Webber; North B reopens as three separate day houses: Barker, Bisseker and Barrett

2008 Opening of the new Cricket Pavilion and extension on Sports Hall; new astro-turf pitch at Latham

2009 Cricket Tour to South Africa

2004 Facebook is created by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard

2005 UK civil partnerships give same-sex couples legal rights

2007 Steve Jobs and Apple launch the first iPhone

2007 Global financial crisis

2008 Barack Obama is elected as the first Black US president

548
pupils on roll
in 2008

Ben Shennan Moulton/Barker 2008-15



For the last six years I've been making molecules. Following three years gaining theoretical expertise in Chemistry at the University of Oxford, I specialised in Organic Chemistry for my Master's - designing new chemical reactions in the lab. I stayed in Oxford to undertake a PhD in Synthetic Chemistry. My thesis focuses on making molecules found in nature, termed "natural products", which possess structures unlike anything humans have made before. In 2024, I was fortunate enough to receive funding to conduct an exhilarating six-month Research Fellowship at the University of Tokyo. DocA's (Rowland Adamson's) mantra that "Chemistry is everywhere!" has underpinned this chemical journey and will stay in the forefront of my mind as I look to the future.



Charles Fraser
Common Room
1996-Current

I did my teaching practice at The Leys in 1991 and loved it. The opportunity to return arose five years later, and 28 years on I am still delighted to be part of this wonderful community. It is the highly engaged, thoughtful, kind pupils along with dedicated and supportive colleagues that have made this such a fulfilling place to be. I have been Head of Divinity in four decades, commanding the CCF twice and founding the Royal Navy Section. With my dogs, Basil and Hector, I taught generations to row and scull, but my greatest privilege was serving as Housemaster of North A for 11 years, during which time I married Livia, herself an OL, and was ordained to the priesthood. The Chapel and the Deer Park are, for me, the essence of this school: tolerant, liberal and non-conformist - Methodism in a nutshell!

"He was my tutor during Sixth Form and was very supportive and helpful throughout the whole time I was at The Leys. I am very grateful for everything he did."

Ellie Beresford, Moulton/Fen 2007-14



Niles Beadman
Barrett/East 2009-14

After The Leys, I studied Chemistry at Oxford where I met my now wife, Jenny, and cemented the scientific trajectory set by the teachers of the Thomson Building. I moved to London, Manchester, then back to Cambridge while training as a patent attorney, and I now help organisations protect and commercialise innovations throughout the chemistry space, particularly in greentech and cheminformatics. I feel fortunate to work with world-renowned inventors and companies; evocative of the speakers I remember hosting and hearing at The Leys.

Despite successful efforts to evade team sport during my schooldays, I discovered cycling, running and later triathlon while at Oxford. I broke three hours in the marathon in 2021 and completed my first Ironman in 2022. Recently, I've been coaching our golden retriever, Tilly, as a running companion.



Ben Barton
Common Room 2005-22

"... incredible pastoral care as Deputy Housemaster of West House"

Mac Boldbaatar, Moulton/West 2005-12



Kamila Karimjee Moulton/Dale 2007-14

The Leys will always hold a special place in my heart. The Music department became a second home, where making music with friends brought joy, lifelong friendships, and unforgettable experiences including tours to Italy and New York. I now visit New York frequently for work and every visit brings back fond memories of that trip. Boarding in Dale was another highlight, cementing friendships that have lasted to this day. After leaving, I studied Biomedical Engineering and completed a PhD in 2022. I now work in data science for a fully remote software startup and live in London, but the flexibility of remote work allows me to travel freely with just a laptop. Music remains a treasured part of my life, and I'll always be grateful to The Leys for inspiring that passion and sense of connection.





Ethna Prosser

Common Room 2003–Current

The Leys has given me so many amazing opportunities and experiences. Whether in the classroom, in house, in choir, on the rounders field, on expedition or around the world, countless Leysians have kept me going with their warmth, wit, boundless energy and sense of fun. There are too many happy memories to recount but much laughter has

ensued, and they have rarely failed to make me smile. My biggest privilege must be the 12 and a half years I served as Housemistress of Bisseker. It was the most fulfilling job, with many challenges and adventures along the way and the Bissekerites will always hold a special place in my heart. I look forward to seeing what my remaining years at The Leys hold.

“Miss Prosser (or Missy P as she was known to the 2007 Fen House cohort) was always fun, supportive and kind to us. She made us laugh and talked to us as adults, not children. Cheers Missy P!”

Rosalind Unwin, Fen 2002–07



Georgia Adamson

Fen 2010–15

During my time at The Leys I discovered a deep passion for creating art. Through the guidance of my tutors – especially **Julie Stobbart** – I pursued my interests at university and now work in the video games industry as a 3D Character Artist. During my career I’ve worked at some of the biggest video games companies in the world, including Epic Games, Jagex and EA, on titles such as *Old School Runescape*, *Fall Guys* and currently *The Sims 4*. My varied pursuits at The Leys prepared me for a vibrant and fulfilling career, travelling to interesting places and connecting with talented creatives in an always-exciting industry.



James scores an Olympic goal against France



James Albery West 2009–14

Since leaving school, I’ve been fortunate to pursue my passion in sport at the highest level, representing England and Great Britain on the international stage. Competing in the 2024 Olympics as part of Team GB was an unforgettable experience. Winning a Commonwealth Games bronze medal and a European silver medal have been personal highlights in my career. Alongside my international commitments, I have thoroughly enjoyed playing for the Old Leysian golf and cricket teams whenever possible. Being involved with these teams has been a highlight for me thanks to the fantastic people involved in them. Staying close to my friends from school has been a huge support and continues to fuel my ambition for the future.

2011–2025



Emy Adamson Fen 2013–16

My career in TV started shortly after my 19th birthday with an internship in unscripted development. I learned how to get a TV show from a simple idea to a fully-fledged production. Since then, I spent the majority of my career at a fantastic company called ExpectationTV, recently moving to become a Development Producer at a very exciting company called Wheelhouse that produces shows across both the UK and the US!

Throughout my career I have had many highlights, developing two series of quiz show *In With a Shout* and mixing with incredible TV professionals. I love my career and was honoured to be selected as one of Broadcast's 2024 Hot Shots. I can't wait to continue my journey and hopefully help to put many more shows on our screens!



Hugh (second from left) with some of the AYDA team



Hugh Anderson

School 2011–16

I first visited Senegal at 18, spending 10 weeks volunteering and immersing myself in "la vie Saint-Louisienne." There, I met El Hadj Ndiaye, a pivotal figure in my story so far. My time in Senegal taught me about unmatched hospitality, that there are many vulnerable children needing support, and that real fulfilment comes from pursuing meaningful purposes. In 2018 I returned to launch Art and Soul of Africa, an online marketplace for Senegalese art and apparel, with all profits supporting El Hadj's charity, AYDA Senegal. I started this while studying at the University of Exeter, and return every year. To any fellow OLs who've yet to find a charitable cause to champion alongside work – please don't wait until you're retired; find something you're passionate about and get started!



Zadie Loft

Dale 2013–18

After The Leys, I studied Classics at Downing College, where I started writing short stories. I then took a Master's in Creative Writing at the University of Oxford, meeting other writers, learning more about the craft and developing my own creative projects. I began my debut novel and signed with a literary agent soon afterwards.

I now work as the Editorial and Marketing Assistant for *The London Magazine*, the UK's oldest literary magazine, a job I love – especially exploring the archive. I'm continuing my writing on the side.

I have The Leys to thank for developing my love of literature, reading, linguistics and classical myths. I miss the breadth of what school offered: it's rare in adult life to be able to engage in academic study, music, sports, shows and talks, all in the space of one day.



Hart Fargo School 2011–16

After leaving The Leys in 2016 I earned a First in English from King's College London before moving to New York to assist playwright Matthew Lopez on his Broadway play, *The Inheritance*. I then worked in the theatre department at CAA, and led the company's global LGBTQ+ network. Currently, I am Creative Producer at Eleanor Lloyd Productions, most recently producing *Shifters* by Benedict Lombe, only the third ever play by a Black British woman to be in the West End.

Outside of work, my writing has been featured in several publications, and commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery and the National Youth Theatre. My debut book, *How Not to Be Sad – or How to Accidentally Write a Cookbook*, will be published in 2025 by Cartouche Press.

2011 Theatre demolished to make room for new theatre (Great Hall) and three new science laboratories

2012 The Leys 1st XV are Daily Mail RBS U18s Vase winners at Twickenham

2013 Great Hall completed; publication of *A Methodist Education: The Leys under Moulton and Barber 1875–1924* by John Harding

2014 Prince Edward formally opens Great Hall; 'Transition Point' sculpture unveiled

2015 Appointment of first female Senior Deputy Head, Mrs C Emma Mayo; The Leys reaches the Hockey Association boys' U16 National Finals

2012 The US rover Curiosity takes a 'selfie' on Mars

2012 London Olympics

2014 Malala Yousafazi becomes the youngest recipient of a Nobel Prize

2016 Britain votes to leave the EU



Benjamin Tsang School 2014-19

As a shy 14-year-old boy coming from Hong Kong, I will be forever grateful for how easily I felt at home at The Leys. For me, it is where I developed true independence and learnt to explore and pursue my own interests and passions. The friendships, memories and lessons I gained from my time at The Leys have undoubtedly shaped who I am and got me to where I am today.

I am currently in my final year of studying Medicine, and soon I will be graduating and practising as a doctor in the NHS. This is just the beginning, and I plan to pursue specialisation in the upcoming years.

Finally, congratulations to the School for reaching this milestone, and thank you to those who have made The Leys the special place that it is.



Joe with Boy George



Joe Bromley Barrett 2013-18

After reading English Literature at King's College London, I had my first internship with Stella McCartney and realised I really wanted to study at a fashion college. I quickly applied and enrolled on Central Saint Martins' BA Fashion Journalism course. During my placement year, I worked at the *Evening Standard* and *ES Magazine*, which was a dream come true. I continued full-time

while finishing my degree and became Junior Fashion Editor upon graduating in 2023. The role is fast-paced and fun - I've interviewed incredible people, from Victoria Beckham to Gary Lineker, and attended fashion weeks in New York and Paris. I was also shortlisted for the Young Journalist of the Year Award 2024 at the London Press Club Awards and was highly commended on the day.



Isabella Routledge Dale 2016-21

Since leaving The Leys in 2021, I have completed a degree from the University of Cambridge. Just like at school, cricket dominated most of my time there. I captained the Women's Blues, including three times at Lord's (I took a hat-trick there in 2024 which was pretty special). I will always have fond memories of Arundel after I scored 202 and 188* in the 50-Over Varsity matches held there. I have represented Middlesex Women since 2022 and captained the team since 2023. Beyond cricket, I am a keen golfer and was fortunate enough to play both Royal St George's and Sunningdale within two weeks of each other for Cambridge! I am currently studying a law conversion course as part of my training contract with Freshfields.



Nick Robinson Common Room 2013-23

"Mr Robinson was my HsM from Y9 until U6 and he was great. Honestly felt like a second dad."

Josh Wheatley, Barker 2018-23



Raphi Harter Moulton/North A, 2017-24

My final speech day was particularly poignant, marking my last appearance in the Chapel Choir as Head Chorister. I had sung in the choir since Y7 and enjoyed every single moment. It led me to playing the organ, which I'm continuing at the University of York where I'm in my first year reading Business Management. I'm also playing university hockey, for which captaining the unbeaten 3rd team in U6 was an invaluable experience. Extra-curricular activities such as Gold DofE have been beneficial more generally. As a boarder in Moulton then in North A, the sense of family and belonging this instilled was hugely important. I appreciate the amazing preparation for life that The Leys provides, and am grateful to the School (and my parents!) for the many opportunities offered.

2018 New organ installed in the Chapel; Wellbeing Prefect added to Prefect team

2019 Vision Studio opened for pupil use

2020 School closes due to the pandemic, with remote teaching; U16 and U18 girls reach the Hockey Association National Finals

2022 School routines return to near normal in September; The Leys rated 'Excellent' in ISI School Inspection

2023 The senior boys' swimming team win the Dunelm Cup at The Bath Cup Competition in London, last won by The Leys in 1939

560
pupils on roll
in 2018

574
pupils on roll
in 2022

2018 Apple becomes the first public company to be worth \$1 trillion

2020 First UK lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic in March; Zoom is the most downloaded app of the year

2022 Queen Elizabeth II dies and is succeeded by Charles III

2023 ChatGPT gains 1 billion users by October; 'Barbenheimer' phenomenon dominates box office

 **Michael Ding** School 2018-23

The Leys proved a transformative chapter in my life. The nurturing environment encouraged me to embrace challenges and gave me the confidence to step outside my comfort zone. I was inspired by teachers who challenged me to dream of untouchable goals and to act with genuine purpose. More than just a school, it was a community where I discovered my passion, developed my character, and learned to navigate life's complexities with optimism and determination!

I pursued a place at the University of the Arts London to study Bespoke Tailoring, driven by a passion for craftsmanship. Recently I

have been preparing for the prestigious Golden Shears competition, a significant opportunity to showcase my skills and creativity. My long-term ambition is to become a cutter on Savile Row and eventually establish my own bespoke tailoring house.



Guy Alexander
North A 2019-24

Having left The Leys last summer, I am now living and working as a Junior Master at Peterhouse Boys School in Zimbabwe. I cover lessons, coach cricket, rowing and tennis, whilst enjoying the campus' two game parks. On school trips I have both hiked the Chimanimani Mountains and travelled (via 'chicken' bus) 14 hours into the bush of Matabeleland South to stalk impala, fish, and kayak near hippos. In February I travelled to Pretoria with the rowing team and at Easter am planning a trip with another OL through Zambia and Tanzania, hopefully ending on the beaches of Zanzibar. Living in Zim has been an incredible experience so far, both culturally and personally, so when I return home in July I'm sure I'll reflect on an awesome 11 months away.



Martin Priestley
The Tenth Head, 2014-Current

Being Head at The Leys for the last (almost) 12 years has been the greatest honour of my professional life. I always felt that my job was to build on the successes and achievements of my predecessors and thus to leave the School in a better place. In that I hope I have succeeded. Previous Heads may point to new developments such as Great Hall, or to seismic strategic decisions, such as the move to co-education. The focus in my time has been more in keeping with Sir Dave Brailsford's memorable phrase about 'performance by the aggregation of marginal gains'. The Leys, I felt, had a clear sense of its own identity, and my role as Head was

not to reinvent but rather to polish that identity. A focus on the quality of our teaching has been rewarded with our best ever examination results (2024), in outstanding inspection reports (2023) and recognition as the *Sunday Times'* Independent School of The Year (twice, including 2024). Uniquely in the School's history, we experienced - during Covid - a busy and successful school with almost no pupils here on site! Guiding The Leys through that was probably the biggest challenge of my time - the nearest comparison perhaps being the enforced wartime exodus to Pitlochry - and I am proud of how we collectively rose to that challenge.

Martin (left) at Lord's last summer with 2024 OLS President John Rolfe, North B 1968-73



Zara Nasir
Dale 2020-22

The Leys will forever hold a special place in my heart. Welcomed with open arms, I found unwavering support, encouragement, and reminders that the sky is the limit. Despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic, my time there was filled with wholesome personal growth, thanks to wonderful friends, teachers, and the wider school community. It became a treasured second home where I developed greater independence and created memories amidst this charming school in the beautiful city of Cambridge.

Since then, I've studied Geography at King's College London, pursuing my passion for global affairs and travel. I've had the privilege of interning as a Sustainability Consultant with Savills UK and continuing my role as Vice President of KCL's GeogSoc and Widening Participation Ambassador, until graduation this summer - how time flies! Congratulations to The Leys on 150 years!

2024 The Cedar of Lebanon on the Headmaster's lawn falls due to waterlogged ground; The Leys wins The Sunday Times Independent School of the Year award for East Anglia

570
pupils on roll
in 2024

2025 The Leys celebrates its sesquicentenary; first female Headteacher, Dr Clare Ives, is appointed for September



Jess Hebden

Common Room 2013–Current

The Leys has been a lot of things to me over the last decade or so, but in its simplest terms, it has been an amazing space to explore Art with wonderful pupils who have bags of curiosity and enthusiasm. At the start of each day I come into the light filled studio, put the Art play list on, make my morning coffee, think about the project

that each pupil is exploring and start opening various artbooks to discuss that day. To step into each of their (rich and always surprising) interior worlds and untangle beautiful, ambitious and original work is a genuine pleasure. So, to each cohort that I have taught over the last 12 years, I just want to say: keep making Art!

“Ms Hebden’s whimsical spirit and constant encouragement to think outside the box has always inspired us. She truly nurtured our creativity!”

Alesha Cheah, Moulton/Fen 2011–18 & George Spiller, East 2016–18



Naia Duncumb

Dale 2020–24

My time at The Leys was incredibly enjoyable and I look back at it fondly, particularly time spent in Dale House and the Art department. Dale became a second home to me and a positive, kind and supportive place thanks to the Dale House team. Equally, the Art department team supported me throughout my four years at The Leys, providing me with an incredible space to explore many of my ideas and develop my skills, which ultimately led me to my decision of pursuing Art further, for which I am so thankful.

Currently I am undertaking an Art and Design Foundation course at University of the Arts London, specialising in Drawing and Conceptual Practice. So far it has been a great experience through which my practice has already developed considerably.



Amira Appell Fen 2018–23

My gap year was a life-changing experience, and one that The Leys perfectly set me up for. I began by teaching dance to children using skills that I learnt at school. I was lucky enough to be cast in a short film, recorded some of my music in a studio and spent much of the year gigging. Halfway through, I set off on my travels, driving up the East

Coast of Australia with a fellow OL. Next, I went to Southeast Asia with another school friend, ending my travels in India. I’ve had amazing new experiences and would highly recommend a gap year to anyone. The Leys encouraged me to get stuck into everything and fuelled my love for dance, acting and music, all of which I now enjoy at university.



Helen ‘Frau’ Williams Common Room 2012–24

I have only just started retirement. Fortunately, I have just moved almost opposite The Leys, so can still hear the school bell which punctuates my day and encourages me to stick to a routine! I have such happy memories of my time at The Leys. I loved teaching German to all ages and abilities and still meet pupils and even parents who continue to address me as Frau! Granta became my second home and I feel so privileged to have lived and worked alongside such fun, talented and kind young ladies – it is true to say we laughed and cried (House Shout!) together but were always there for each other. The Leys also offered me great opportunities and I was lucky to participate in some amazing school trips. I have also made lifelong friends in the Common Room and for that I am truly grateful.

“‘Frau’ was like a second mother to me, being so supportive, kind and understanding.”

Beata Kelly, Granta 2018–20



Bohdan Mashurovskyi

School 2022-24

The Leys was more than a school: it was a sanctuary sheltering me from war back home in Ukraine, where I built lasting friendships, and a strong foundation for my future. The incredible support from teachers, staff members and peers helped me thrive, persevere through challenges, and dream beyond the boundaries of my past.

This year, as a Baret Scholar, I had the opportunity to explore the world, alongside exceptional peers from 40

countries. I also embraced the challenge of studying Mandarin and further explored my interests in computer science and coding.

I now eagerly await responses from US colleges, where I have applied to study Economics. As I take the next steps in my journey, I am determined to embrace every opportunity to learn, grow, and make a positive impact on the communities I am part of.

Ali Annett Common Room 2017-Current

The pupils give me inspiration each day. From new scientific ideas that they have read about, to experiments they want to conduct or even just a different perspective on a topic we cover in the curriculum. When I enter the classroom, I may know exactly what I want to teach but how the lessons progress depends on them. With such a high level of engagement it is often the questions or ideas they bring that yield the most memorable moments. Many often struggle with

Physics, it comes with the territory, but they are willing to try and support each other to succeed.

I have been so grateful to be a part of each of the pillars of learning; from academic to pastoral and the extra curricula. Coaching hockey teams, working in Fen House, running STEM clubs as well as teaching in the classroom has given me a teaching career where I feel excited to come to work each day.



“Ali Annett had a tremendous impact on my time at The Leys as a tutor and a teacher. She helped throughout all my A Level subjects and has given me help and advice that will last throughout my years.”

Jon Winfrey, East 2017-19



Roberts, Dewhirst and Wheatley: a Leysian Family History

This remarkable family has been coming to The Leys for 124 years.

Its youngest Leysian, **Sam Wheatley**, is currently in Upper Sixth taking Maths, Economics and Physics at A Level and looking to study Economics at university next year. His brother **Josh, Barker 2018-23** is one of our more recent Old Leysians.

Sam and Josh’s great great grandfather **Sidney Roberts** attended the Leys 1904-06, with his brothers **Donald** and **W Howard** attending 1901-03 and 1903-05 respectively. All were in School House. Donald later became a school Governor.

Donald and Howard were both honoured for bravery in WWI; Donald with a Crosse de Guerre and Military Cross with Bar, and Howard with the Italian Medal for Valour.

Donald’s three sons **Edward, North B 1926-30, Michael, North B 1935-40** and **Gerald, North B 1932-36** followed in their father’s footsteps. Tragically, all three were killed in action during WWII, an

unthinkable loss for one family. Their names are carved on the Chapel memorial, and their ultimate sacrifice never forgotten.

In recent years the Wheatley family donated a Leys blazer of Sidney’s to the Archive.

Sam and Josh’s great uncle **Ian Dewhirst**, grandson of Sidney, attended The Leys 1961-66, in School House, his daughter **Philippa, Dale 1991-93** joining the Sixth Form in the days before the School was fully co-educational. The Dewhirst Charitable Trust contributed generously to the funding of Great Hall, which was opened in 2013.

During Josh’s time at The Leys he completed his Gold DofE, captained the Rugby 1st XV and attained the rank of Corporal in the CCF - whilst making time to secure strong A Level grades and hone his skills as a guitarist. The last word in this family portrait goes to him.



“I have just started studying Aerospace Engineering at Swansea University and hope to go into a sector working on jet or rotary-wing aircraft. My time at The Leys was amazing. It really helped grow my confidence and my communication skills, which has helped me tremendously.”

Josh Wheatley, Barker 2018-23



A Final Word

It has been a real pleasure to read this commemorative magazine and learn more about how The Leys has grown from those first 16 pupils at its founding to the prosperous school it is today. In preparing to join in September 2025 as the first female Head, I particularly enjoyed reading about how those Granta girls exploded onto the scene in 1984, all with fascinating successes that were just the start of the empowered co-educational community with which the School is now synonymous.

The ethos and values of The Leys have remained steadfast over the last 150 years, and that is reflected in the words of the many Old Leysians who have lent their voices to this publication. They speak of the direct impact the School had on their lives, which in many cases have been extraordinary, and it is in that school to pupil symbiosis that The Leys has also thrived.

I am excited to get to know the Leysian family going forward, and proud to be the next custodian of this remarkable establishment. Here's to a fabulous sesquicentenary, and the next 150 years.

Dr Clare Ives, The Eleventh Head





150
1875-2025
ACHIEVING THE EXCEPTIONAL

At the Heart of the Leysian Family

It has been an honour to be the Director of Development for the 150th year of The Leys. While creating this special magazine, our small team has thoroughly enjoyed engaging with everyone who has been a part of it; it has been an absolute privilege to share your journeys. Thank you to the wider Old Leysian community for responding in your hundreds to nominate your former teachers for inclusion, and for the accompanying quotes, beautifully articulating what made them so special.

A large part of what we do in our office is enable alumni relations to thrive, so if you would like to get in touch with any of your old school friends do contact us.

It is always a joy to be able to reunite friends from years past.

This magazine demonstrates how much love there is for The Leys across the community and as such, you may wish to consider supporting future generations; if so, there are many ways you can do this and we'd love to hear from you.

Sarah Proud, Director of Development

