

THE OLD HENDONIAN ♦ 2026 ♦



ISSUE NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

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Dear Old Hendonians and Friends,

A very warm welcome to another edition of the *Old Hendonian*. Once again, we are fortunate to include a wide range of material which will hopefully be of interest to all. My grateful thanks go to all contributors, including Derek Holder for a nice snippet of his school memories; the Headteachers for another really comprehensive insight into all the great things going on within the school; and not forgetting the slots from all our “regulars,” for which I thank them warmly – although Ashleigh Brilliant is no more, and will be sadly missed. And there is a report of a 50-year reunion of a good number of my old classmates!

As promised last year, David Eadon’s former interview slot now continues under the guise of “Your Editor Meets.” My grateful thanks to Jim Ballantyne for being the first to go “under the (new) spotlight.” The first thing you’ll notice is a much wider range of questions, both school-related and otherwise. From the point of view of anyone who might consider being “interviewed” for a future magazine, please don’t take what you see at face value – I gave Jim even more questions to choose from, so he felt comfortable answering the ones which he did ... and you might see quite different kinds of questions answered in future years.

My usual thanks go to my proofreaders – and, of course, a special thank you to everyone who has made a donation to Friends of Hendon School, for which we are always very grateful.

With sincere best wishes to you all,

Alan Freedman – Editor

POET'S CORNER

FROM MIRIAM WEBBER ...

IN PRAISE OF ST. TRINIAN'S

Long years have passed since Ronald Searle
first drew a small black-stockinged girl.
Quite unaware of what he'd done:
the St. Trinian's Story had begun.

Eleven years it throbbed with life
abetted by the artist's wife:
well documented by Kaye Webb
who set down all its flow and ebb.

Fond memories of St. Trinian's girls,
black gym slips, truncheons, ribbons, curls
acquiring admiration, fame,
no other school could lay such claim.

The head girl, Rachel, in her den
sharpens her knife – to hunt again.
They've drowned Drusilla – seaside prank,
"It took so long until she sank."

As carol singers on Christmas Day
"For the people who'll pay us to go away"
"Miss Merryweather's done – now tea..."
(they've hanged her from the playground tree).

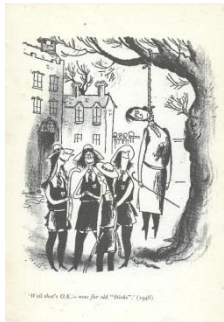
They plan their games with great delight:
"We'll burn the East wing down tonight."

To Elspeth, stretched out on the rack:
"Hell, play-time's over – but we'll be back!"

The new science mistress, a witch, comes flying,
a teaching asset – no denying,
her lessons cover poisons, spells,
in wicked scheming she excels.

St. Trinian's, that great Gothic school,
success meant breaking every rule
attaining its exalted station
through vain attempts at education.

I offer thanks to Mr. Searle:
by creating every ghoulish girl
and cruelly challenged teaching staff
he's given millions cause to laugh.



Miriam Webber, née Retkin
(1945 – 1950)

NEWS FROM OLD HENDONIANS

Your Editor has had the pleasure of meeting up with fellow Old Hendonians three times so far in 2026 – the first two on consecutive days!

On 3rd February, he took **Professor Alan Izenman (1957 – 1964)** round the school – he was here on one of his regular visits from the USA. We exchanged quite a few reminiscences – especially when we slowly made our way along the top corridor of the old building as we recalled where our old form rooms used to be – and chatted to some of the current members of staff. Eventually, we made it to the newer parts of the school – here is a picture of us both in the library.



On the following day – which was pleasantly bright and sunny – your Editor travelled out to see **Philip Churcher (1946 – 1954)** who gave him some nice memorabilia to add to the school archives. We

spent a most enjoyable afternoon in each other's company, preceded by a splendid pub lunch at Stoke Poges, where this picture was taken.

Philip had the good fortune to celebrate two happy occasions on the same day last September: his 90th birthday, and the wedding of one of his granddaughters at Corfe Castle, where the following picture was taken.



On 20th March, your Editor and a few old classmates **David Ellis, Charles Weinstein, Christian Redford, Ravi Patel** (pictured left to right) and **Ruben Aszkenasy** – met up with each other and our old English and Latin teacher **Anne Livesey-Haworth (1969 – 1974,** pictured to the right of Charles) at a café in Brent Street. We had a lot of catching up to do – she hadn't seen most of us for over fifty years!



Jill Hickman (staff, 1976 – 2014) writes:

I continue to meet past students both young and older as I go through the year. Some out doing their weekly food shop, some in London or just a chance encounter in the street or a restaurant. It is really nice to bump into someone who recognises me (I don't always recall them though!)

Of course, I still keep in contact with my contemporaries and those Barnet PE teachers who meet up usually a couple of times per year.

I did meet an ex-student who remembers Mr Potts and Jack Driver. Apparently this person was expelled after being at Hendon for a while ... Nice guy though!

I am in good health – just fighting the normal aches, pains and stiffness of the 70s, but still tending to my ponies and swimming/walking regularly, above all else.

Rose Chue (1959 – 1966) writes:

I left Hendon County – as it then was – in 1966. I have always had good memories of my years there, and would be forever grateful to such as Mr E.W. Maynard Potts, the headmaster during my time, Mr Kenneth Nicholson, my Form 1 Class and English teacher, and Miss Constance Ward, who gave me the freedom of the Art Store room. After graduation from university, I went to the Pacific as a VSO for two years, and really since then have seldom gone back to England, working in the field of education until retirement in Hong Kong in 2008. I managed only one return visit to Golders Rise – but it was in the summer, and the school was closed.

I am now wheelchair-bound, but still comparatively mentally active as a volunteer in the English Language section of a Lutheran seminary situated on the edge of a country park in the hills. I have a ground floor room in the dorms.

I remember an Avril Freedman [your Editor's late sister] in my year at Hendon, who shared my interest in drama. As our Form 7 post-exams activity, we organised a group of juniors, and put on a play called *The Swan Princess*. Avril wrote the script.

We are expecting the first typhoon of the year at the moment. It is very, very hot ... the best place to be is to be resting with the air conditioning on. And that is what I will be doing!

Hope to hear from you, even though circumstances mean I cannot be too active. I owe a lot to Hendon.

Here is a picture of **Reg Beckley (1942 – 1948)** looking quite splendid playing the role of one of the shepherds in *A Winter's Tale* last summer.



Clive Winton (1966 – 1973) and his wife Diana have been on their travels again ... on a recent trip to Barbados, they met up with your Editor's old classmate

Dr Philip Corbin (1968 – 1975) and his wife Rose.

Here is a picture of the four of them together: Diana, Clive, Rose, and Philip left to right.



Richard Moulder (staff, 1970 – 1971), who visited the school very recently, writes:

Many happy remembrances come to mind. I did my final teaching practice at HCGS – I'd been a student at The New College of Speech & Drama, based in Ivy House, opposite the Old Bull & Bush in North End Road.

Mr Potts and Ken Woollard (Head of English) decided they needed a Drama Specialist – hence my appointment in September 1970. I lodged right next door to the school. Ken had digs upstairs and created a room for me downstairs.

I recall Gertie Stranz, Hans Freund (a local cantor), Steve Dresner (Physics) and many others.

I kept in touch with many students, including Raymond Gluckman whom I saw on Blue Peter – he'd created the largest man-made crystal in the world !!

Before I left, I held a series of "garden parties" for my class. My landlady provided cakes and drinks! You couldn't do that today.

Certain pupils stand out in my memory: David Goldman (he knew every staff's phone number!), Claire Nissel (daughter of Siegmund Nissel, violinist with the Amadeus String Quartet), Penny Blitz, and Susan Brahams. For quite a while, I corresponded with them from Edinburgh where I went on to work.

Any information about any of them would be superb! [please contact your Editor in the first instance].

Here, where I live in Derbyshire, I still meet many former students and colleagues. I enjoy all the reminiscences. I still see my former school pals from The Crypt Grammar in Gloucester ... I love it!

The Saatchi Gallery in London is the setting for an exhibition this summer featuring the work of several artists including **Sinta Tantra (1991 – 1995)**, an acclaimed artist who works in many different types of media.

The theme of this major exhibition is *The Sun And The Moon: Art Inspired by The Celestial* – exploring how the two most powerful and enduring phenomena in the sky have inspired creativity, curiosity and belief throughout human history and across different cultures. The exhibition is now open to the public, and runs until 8th September.

Works by three artists, including Sinta, introduce the exhibition before the journey begins at Dawn, which includes works exploring how early cultures rationalised the Sun and Moon as deities and cosmic forces. These celestial bodies were woven into myths and belief systems as symbols of power, presented through historical artefacts ranging from the Sol Invictus Celtic Bust dated between the first century BC and the first century AD, to a faithful replica of the Nebra Sky Disc, alongside works by contemporary emerging artists such as Sunju Jin, Jai Khanna and Lian Zhang.

For more information, please visit

https://sintatantra.com/usr/documents/exhibitions/press-release_url/140/the-sun-and-the-moon-press-release.pdf



Colindale Tube station – on the Edgware branch of the Northern line, and one stop away from Hendon Central – became step-free for the first time following the opening of a new ticket hall just before Christmas last year.

The new ticket hall replaces the old 1960s entrance and is larger, allowing more space for passengers during busy periods. Changes have also been made outside the station, including a wider pavement for pedestrians.

Work on the station upgrade began in January 2024 and was funded by the Government, with contributions from Barnet Council, local developers and Transport for London. Before the upgrade, the station was expected to reach full passenger capacity by 2026.

As part of the works, the station closed for six months in the second half of 2024 to allow for major construction. It partially reopened in December 2024, with passengers using the existing ticket hall while work continued on the new entrance.

Now that the new ticket hall has opened, further work is still to be completed. This includes installing an accessible customer toilet, adding permanent signage, providing more cycle parking and opening new retail space within the station. These final stages are expected to be finished by mid-2026. The old ticket hall will be demolished, and discussions are ongoing about how the site could be used in the future.

London's Deputy Mayor for Transport, Seb Dance, said: "The Mayor and I feel strongly that everyone should be able to enjoy everything our great capital has to offer, which means it's vital

we make our transport network as accessible as possible. I'm delighted that Colindale is now the 94th step-free Tube station and will benefit from a whole host of other improvements to not only improve accessibility, but also support major housing developments in the local area, as well as boosting local businesses and inclusive economic growth. More than a third of Underground stations across the capital are step-free, and we are determined to keep growing this number as we build a fairer, better London for everyone."

Rail Minister, Lord Peter Hendy, said: "With nearly £30 million in Government investment, the new step-free Colindale station is a testament to what delivering a modern, inclusive transport system can do for local communities. This upgrade will not only make journeys easier and more comfortable for thousands of Londoners, but will support thousands of new homes and boost local growth for years to come."

"Improving accessibility across our transport network is a priority for this Government, and this is a brilliant example of that commitment in action."



Barnet Council and Bauer Media Outdoor have unveiled the borough's first plant-covered 'living roof' bus shelter in **Cricklewood**.

The bus stop, born out of the BarNET ZERO Challenge, where residents put forward their best ideas for tackling climate change, can be found in busy Cricklewood Lane.

The winning project, GRUBS – Green Roofs Upon Bus Shelters – was submitted by Fiona

Quinton, a long-time Barnet resident passionate about biodiversity and green urban spaces. The project's aim is to help support urban biodiversity, clean the air, and inspire greener public design across the capital. The lightweight roof, developed in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and covered with attractive sedum flowering plants, will help to absorb rainwater, attract pollinators, and filter out harmful air particles. Cllr Alan Schneiderman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, said: "This is an exciting milestone for Barnet, and shows how community innovation can help us reach our goal of becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs. Small ideas like this can make a big difference."

Fiona Quinton, BarNET ZERO Challenge winner, added:

"I've lived in Barnet for more than 30 years, and love our parks and green spaces. I'm thrilled that residents will be able to enjoy a more calming, natural space while waiting for their bus – in addition to the benefits of increased biodiversity and cleaner air, this will make our streets feel more alive."

Sarah Mead, Head of Council and Corporate Partnerships at Bauer Media Outdoor, said:

"We're proud to partner with Barnet to bring our first living roof shelter to London, following their ongoing successful rollout all around the UK. It's a step that demonstrates how public infrastructure can be both beautiful and beneficial for the environment and the community."

This installation supports Barnet's wider ambition to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2042 and to become one of London's most sustainable boroughs. Plans are under way to install another bus shelter with a living roof in the borough in the coming months.

Barnet Council has reintroduced **weekly food waste collections** from the end of March 2026, with a new hero on the streets: "Barnetta The Bincredible". The name was chosen from 472 entries in Barnet's Food Waste Vehicle Naming Competition, which invited residents to submit fun, memorable names for the new service. Local resident Alan Williams won the competition for his witty entry. Here he is, on the right, being presented with a £100 food shopping voucher by Cllr Alan Schneiderman, at a photo opportunity



in front of the newly branded food waste vehicle. Cllr Schneiderman said:

"Alan's entry is witty, memorable and really captures the fun and purpose of our *Doing Our Bit, Barnet* food waste recycling campaign.

"It's brilliant to see the community getting involved, engaging with Barnet's sustainability and climate action initiatives, and helping the borough reach its Net Zero 2042 ambitions." The reintroduction of separate weekly food waste collections was a council priority required by legislation brought in by the last Government, which made household food waste collection mandatory by April 2026. Nearly 60% of household waste in the UK is discarded food. Collected food waste will be processed at an anaerobic facility, turning it into fertiliser for farmland and electricity for homes.



Barnet Council has awarded £70,000 to support ten community-led and locally based heritage projects this year, as part of Barnet's cultural programme **Light and Flight**, a year of creativity, connection and belonging.

This grant programme, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, will allow artists, residents and local partners to uncover hidden histories,

share stories and create new work inspired by Barnet's past, present and future. Light and Flight is supported by a Cultural Impact Award, part of the Mayor's London Borough of Culture programme.

Cllr Anne Clarke, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts & Sport, said: "Light and Flight is an ambitious and inclusive cultural programme shaped with and for the people of Barnet.

"We want to make our heritage more visible and meaningful for everyone, and the Community Heritage Grants will really help local organisations uncover, explore and share the stories, places, people and traditions that shape our borough."

Barnet Council received 49 competitive applications for funding of £5,000 – £10,000, for heritage projects that celebrate Barnet's unique culture and creativity.

Successful recipients of the grant include:

- **Colindale Communities Trust** – Highlighting the story of the Hendon Aerodrome and the Grahame Park estate
- **East Finchley Community Trust, in collaboration with The Finchley Pollinator Project** – Reconnecting people, green spaces, and local history through historic walking routes
- **Burnt Oak Nepalese Community** – Documenting and celebrating the lives, memories and cultural roots of Nepalese people in Burnt Oak
- **JUST INCARNIVAL Arts and Culture** – Celebrating Barnet's diverse cultural identities through carnival arts and migration stories
- **Heritage Community Crafts** – Exploring crochet traditions preserved by African and Caribbean seniors in the UK
- **Stonegrove Estates Youth Project / St Peter's Stonegrove** – Commemorating the journey of the Stonegrove community
- **F.U.S.E Youth Project** – Making a documentary film about youth clubs in Grahame Park and Colindale
- **CB Plus** – Celebrating the lived

experiences of Barnet's African diaspora communities

- **Barnet Education Arts Trust (BEAT)** – Exploring local stories, people, and traditions through interdisciplinary arts

Earlier this month, the council announced a series of creative commissions for the Light and Flight programme, including the appointment of award-winning artist Matthew Rosier, working in collaboration with leading public art organisation UP Projects, to create a major artistic commission. Light and Flight will continue to reveal further programme details and opportunities for residents to get involved throughout 2026.

Visit lightandflight.co.uk to discover more, and sign up to the newsletter for the latest updates as the programme builds towards its celebratory finale in November 2026.



In March, young people across Barnet voted to elect their **Members of UK Youth Parliament** and **Barnet Youth Ambassadors** for the 2026 – 2028 term.

The elected school pupils will represent their peers at national and local levels during their two-year term.

The UK Youth Parliament is made up of more than 300 elected young people aged between 11 to 18 years, and provides opportunities to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. This includes an annual sitting in the House of Commons, where Members of Youth Parliament vote on their national priority campaigns.

Barnet's Youth Ambassadors take part in the policy-making process at a local level, including influencing the work of Barnet Council and ensuring the voices of young people are heard when decisions are made.



What is a school? A school is a building to house pupils for education. I would suggest that teachers are really the school! These fine people have decided that education of the young will be their vocation. There surely can be no greater achievement than to have a child pass through your hands and help develop that child into a young adult. To help expand their mind by introducing subjects and providing the opportunity for a child to attain knowledge which will ultimately give direction for that child's future.

Of course, not all teachers and children have a special relationship. The subject may not be especially stimulating. Maybe the teacher doesn't resonate with a particular child. This happens!

One teacher I recall with great affection was Mr H. J. Taylor. His subject was Religious Instruction (RI). He was christened "Holy Joe" because of his initials. I'm sure he was aware of this. Back in the early sixties when I was fourteen, I had little interest in RI. I will say that over the years when discussing matters of religion, I am pleased to report that some of Mr Taylor's efforts have lodged with me. Youngsters today seem to know little of the scriptures.

Mr Taylor would stride into the room and ask a pupil about what we had been discussing during the previous lesson. With a shake of his head, he would remind us and continue.

Mr Taylor was a teacher you had to respect. His persona was that he was here to teach us oiks and we would pay attention. We did. Questions would be asked – and we all prayed he wouldn't choose one of us for the answer! Along with his stern demeanour, he had humour though, and I grew to like him very much. He didn't mind a little banter – but you knew when to draw the line.

On one occasion, he came into the classroom and proceeded to tell us a humorous story. This involved a boy who was asked to come to front of class and recount the story of the "Flight to Egypt." This was of the time when Herod had decreed that all newborns were to be put to death.

The boy asked for chalk and proceeded to draw an aeroplane on the blackboard. There were four portholes. The teacher asked the boy to explain what he had drawn. “Well Sir, this is the flight to Egypt.” “What do these four portholes represent?” asked the teacher. “Well Sir, the one at the back is Jesus. In front of him is Mary, his Mother. In front of Mary is Joseph the Father.” “Who is the one in the front?” asked the teacher. “That’s Pontius the pilot!” revealed the boy. Our class had a good laugh. That was the man. You had to like him and give him your respect. If you stepped out of line, he would deal with you, and you looked small in front of the class. If caught talking, he would beckon you to the front, and as punishment would draw a circle on the blackboard and request that you stand with your nose in the circle, which was just a little higher, making you stand on tiptoe. A just and fair punishment.

On one occasion, I was given detention . Mr Taylor was tasked with dealing with us errant lads. “Now then. It’s a fine evening. Who would like to go litter picking in the playground and the field, or who would prefer to write an essay?” Out of the twelve, ten asked for litter picking. “Right you lot. You will stay in and write an essay. You two can go litter picking!” Big groan. He had us well and truly. I am still smiling all these years later. I cherish the memory.

If Mr Taylor had taught Maths, I think I might have done well. Interestingly (to me), he drove a light blue “sit up and beg” Ford Popular at this time. I remember the number plate VLU 237 ... why do I remember that?

Jack Driver was a teacher I respected greatly. He never taught me, but he took us boys for football at Pursley Road. I remember the bus had signage saying – No Spitting! During the game, I managed a brilliant through pass which might have resulted in a goal. “Great pass Del” he called to me. Hang on ... a teacher calling me by my first name. Am I hearing things?? Mr Driver was truly loved by the boys. He was special.

Pupils of those years, born after the war, have been christened “Baby Boomers.” We had the best time. Growing up, most of us were from very similar backgrounds. Passing the eleven plus was truly something to be proud of. Some of us went on to be masters in our chosen field. Some less so. Those teachers helped us along the way, and we benefitted greatly from their knowledge and their dedication.

Derek Holder (1957 – 1962)

REG BECKLEY REMEMBERS



1942 – 1948

OLD HENDONIANS BADMINTON CLUB

Badminton experienced a massive resurgence after World War 2, and the Old Hendonians joined in when Geoff Valentine and I revived the club in 1949. Evidence of its pre-war existence could be seen by the permanent court markings in the old school hall, and – somewhat surprisingly – a set of court-side lamps stored away in the “Dungeon.”

Other pre-war items also surfaced: the Wilkinson Cup for Men’s singles and the Byatt cup for the Ladies’.



“School”



O.H.B.C.

We sought competition, joined the Middlesex League for a couple of seasons, and played a couple of matches with the sixth form club when it reformed in 1951.

National Service and other career demands reduced my personal participation ... and, despite the best efforts of Audrey Klein and Geoff, the club expired due to lack of support in the mid-1950s.

The Wilkinson Cup was a gift to the pre-war badminton club from a teacher of that name. It was passed on post-war by his son.

I should mention that the Old Hendonians blazer handed to me by “Scrubs” certainly belonged to Denis Harbottle. According to the spring 1946 edition of the school magazine, he was an able seaman killed in action, I’m sure, on one of the battleships of the Royal Navy.



JIM BALLANTYNE



Jim Ballantyne was a student at Hendon County Grammar School (HCGS) from 1950 to 1957. After graduation from London University with a BSc in Mechanical Engineering, he worked for international engineers Babcock & Wilcox commissioning, designing and operating power stations and heat recovery plant worldwide. He unashamedly admits that he spent much of his career promoting the use of coal as fuel! After leaving B&W, he worked for Slough Estates as Engineering Manager at their power station in Slough, eventually retiring in 2004 at the age of 65. He continues his life-long fascination with trains and railways, and has travelled widely with his wife, Magdalena, to many countries in search of antique railways.



What is your claim to fame?

Frankly, I don't have one. Although I was quite well known in my area of work expertise (power station boilers, waste heat recovery, steam generation in general), this scarcely made me famous!

Why did your family choose to live in Hendon?

To answer this question, I need to relate some family history ... firstly, we didn't live in Hendon but Mill Hill. My father, who lived close to my mother in Mill Hill, became a middle-ranking manager in the then new steelworks in Corby. Having settled there, he returned, married my mother, and they in turn settled in Corby where my sister was born. However, he died in March 1939 and, perforce, my mother returned to Mill Hill and I was born in Hendon in the April. Thus, living in Mill Hill was due to circumstances rather than choice.

What is your earliest memory?

Early memories can often be more imagined than real ... but I do have one of which I am certain. It would have been in 1943 or 1944 and we lived close to Hendon Aerodrome, a target for the Luftwaffe. I recall my mother was just settling us into bed when the sound of a V1 was heard approaching. This had little effect on me: I suppose I was already immune to the regular bangs of anti-aircraft fire and distant explosions of falling bombs, but I distinctly recall my mother's fear.

Who in your schooldays most influenced you?

If I have to nominate individuals, I would select four of my HCGS schoolteachers, namely Miss Stranz (chemistry), Mr. Gow (physics), Mr. Morris (pure maths) and Mr. Murphy (applied maths) – but to this list I really should also add Miss Evans, who was our first-class English teacher up to O-level.

What was your most memorable experience in HCGS?

I think it was my first day there. Just two of us had “graduated” from the junior school in Edgware: myself and Mike Musikant, now resident “across the pond.” We agreed to stick together, and I well remember we were impressed – indeed overwhelmed – with the size of our new school (and, let it be said, by the size of some of the senior pupils!) compared with the rather bungaloidal aspect of single-storey Edgware Juniors.

What was your most amusing experience in HCGS?

I think this was when Miss Stranz “got her own back” on us. It was as follows: she was to be late for our A-level chemistry lesson, so we prepared a small sample of carbylamine, one of the most foul-smelling chemicals known to man. This we placed on her bench, and sat at ours in earnest study. She came in and instantly recognised what was afoot, but said nothing. However, towards the end of the lesson, she asked us to gather round for some sort of demonstration, so we all had to inhale the obnoxious odour. She swept out without another word ... but with a slight smile!

Where and when did you get married?

In the city of Iași in north-eastern Romania on 17th November 1966, after a long battle with the communist authorities. My wife was a graduate in chemical engineering from the prestigious university in Iași. Thus we celebrate our 60th anniversary in 2026!

What is your favourite part of London?

Not easy ... but I have to mention South Kensington with its museums, and also Trafalgar Square for its galleries and concerts.

What is your favourite building – and why?

Can I have three, please?

The Science Museum is one – I have always been in awe of our predecessors in engineering and science! Then Durham Cathedral with its massive stonework, making me marvel at the ability of the stonemasons and builders of yesteryear. Finally, the remote grandeur of Hermitage Castle in the Scottish Borders.

Have you travelled much?

Yes. After graduation, I worked for an international engineering company, Babcock & Wilcox. It was not long before I was sent abroad and spent periods of years, months, weeks or just days working in over 30 countries. These places ranged from stricken steamships to military and communist dictatorships where my mail was censored, my telephone tapped, and my movements were carefully monitored. Add those countries visited for pleasure, and the total is about 60.

What was your best holiday – and why?

Probably an extensive four-week trip with a group to South America in 1983. Whilst business had already taken me to Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, this was my – our – (my wife was with me) first visit to the Americas, and was most exciting!

What is your favourite film – and why?

I have two films in mind, one for its humour and the other for its settings and actors. These are, respectively, *Some Like It Hot* and *Doctor Zhivago*.

What is the last book you read?

I have recently read *One Hundred Days of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and also *Alone in Berlin* by Hans Fallada. I recently picked up a second-hand book of Bernard Shaw plays, and am currently reading these. However, I also receive regular magazines, including those from the National Trust, English Heritage, RSPB, History Today, and railway-related magazines. I have provided numerous articles on obscure railway subjects for some of these!

What was the last CD you listened to?

We have a reasonable collection of classical CDs. Among my favourites are Vivaldi's "Gloria", Mahler's symphonies (nos. 2 and 4 particularly) plus a diskette of Thomas Tallis.

What is in your bathroom cupboard?

Frankly, just razors, shaving cream, toothpaste and so on. Perhaps it should be "What is NOT in my bathroom cupboard!" ... and the answer to this is any form of male cosmetics.

You're the fashion police: what do you ban?

Tattoos! These disfiguring graffiti irritate me!

What makes you depressed?

Just looking at the modern world with its removal of personal interactions and its dependence on electronic communications, social media, and AI.

What is the biggest threat facing humanity?

Uncontrolled population growth – too many people!

Where would you most like to live?

Not easy: If you asked which foreign country I would choose, the answer would be Scotland, insofar that Scotland is a "foreign" country! My father was a Scot, I have spent some time working, living and just visiting Scotland, and always enjoyed my time there.

If you could live in a different period of time, when would you choose – and why?

I would go back to 2004. I had just retired with an adequate pension, good health, and the world was relatively peaceful, making travel easier. Moreover, communism had all but disappeared.

If you could sit down and have a meal with any three people, alive or dead, who would you choose – and why?

The first would surely be my late father who, as mentioned above, died before I was born. I would like to know more about his experiences in WW1 and later when he worked in Ceylon. The second would be my maternal great-grandfather, Prof. Henry Robinson. He was an engineer and prior to taking up a teaching post at King's College, London, he was a personal assistant to Sir William Armstrong of the famous company based in Newcastle. The third would be my wife's father, my father-in-law. I never met him as he died in 1954, but I would

like to learn about his childhood and youth in NE Romania as well as his wartime experiences during WW2, and also his memories of the communist take-over and USSR domination.

What is your favourite smell?

I love the smell of a pine forest or the sea. But, believe it or not, I also enjoy the smells from my working career, among these being that of a steelworks with its hot metal and so on!

What is your greatest extravagance?

I have been a railway enthusiast for 80 years! In that time, I have spent an inordinate amount of time chasing trains worldwide, and also amassed a collection of railway-related books now numbering well over 1000!

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A comfortable armchair, a good book, a glass of something, and the company of my wife!

How would your friends describe you in three words?

I hate to think!

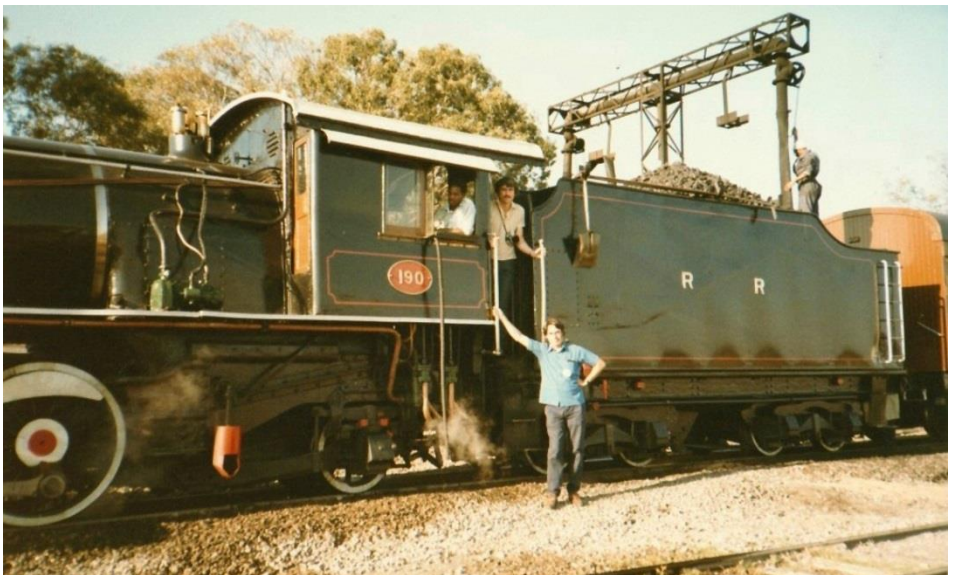
What is the best advice you have been given?

Take advantage of educational opportunities ... and be prepared to work hard!

What would you most like to be doing ten years from now?

I'd like to be alive – I am now 86! (probably 87 by the time this is published).

Thank you, Jim, for giving up your time for our Old Hendonian readers!



Here is a picture of Jim (in the blue shirt) at Heany Junction in Zimbabwe, having driven the loco and train (under supervision!) from Mbalabala in 1985.

CLASS OF 1968 – 1975 REUNION

Geography field trips, school concerts, temporary classrooms, the science labs, sports days, and the sixth form common room were among the reminiscences between members of the Class of '75. On a hot and sunny afternoon on 29th June last year, around 50 people gathered in the garden of the Adam & Eve pub in Mill Hill, rekindled friendships, shared fond memories, laughed over old class photos, exchanged contact details, and just enjoyed spending time together.

For some, this was a chance to catch up with long-standing friends who have remained close contacts ever since school days. For others, there was a

moment's hesitation before mutual recognition of a face not seen since the last reunion, or possibly even longer.

Given the average age of attendees,

it was not surprising that there were animated conversations on the joys of retirement, and the rationale for others to still enjoy working (even if that is for a reduced number of days or hours each week). It was fitting amongst the chatter to take a moment to pause and remember those sadly no longer with us, and to hear greetings from faraway places where our former school friends have made their homes.

A big thank you goes to the small but energetic group of former pupils who planned for the reunion, and most particularly to Hendon School archivist, and holder of the contact list over so many years Alan Freedman. The group debated the best time of year to hold the reunion (broadly we agreed there was never an ideal time), considered the pros and cons of meeting at the school, and researched the opportunities to include refreshments at other potential venues. As we had no collective funds to cover the rather hefty deposits required, and right up until the day were not entirely sure about numbers attending, the chosen venue came about almost by default. In the event, it proved a reasonably accessible meeting place for those who were driving and reliant on public transport – and helped in no small measure by the beautiful weather.

The Class of '75 was most definitely melded together through experiment and some difficulty, as they

comprised pupils who in the autumn of 1968 started senior school at either Hendon County Grammar School or St David's (boys) Secondary Modern. 1971 saw a huge upheaval for many schools in the borough, and several major changes ahead for all of us, with the compulsory introduction of comprehensive secondary education.

The retirement of Mr E W Maynard Potts as long-time headmaster at Hendon acted as the catalyst for a large number of teaching staff also leaving. Much shaking of heads (more amongst our parents than ourselves) ensued, with concern for the standard of education on offer at the re-branded Hendon Senior High School. Equal trepidation was felt by our year

group pupils of St David's, who were expected, from the autumn of 1971, to attend school in Golders Rise. Year group numbers swelled from about 90 to 150, and we suddenly found ourselves split into

six forms instead of three. It was certainly a period of adjustment for all of us, and particularly for teaching and support staff who were expected to undertake duties both at Golders Rise and St David's Place. Reflecting more than 50 years later, the overwhelming view was that – all things considered for most of us – we still look back fondly on our time at Hendon. We can laugh about some of the difficulties we had to overcome (notably a fire rendering the sixth form common room unusable, just when we were looking forward to taking up residence). We can be glad of the broadening of the curriculum, and the breadth of sporting and musical talent and opportunity that bringing the two schools together offered. Grateful for the diligent dedication of many of the teaching staff, and lucky for the many enduring friendships formed during our school years. After a happy afternoon spent together, the overwhelming view expressed by those attending (and some who would have liked to be there, but were either on holiday or had other unavoidable commitments) was that we should look to meet again as a group in five years' time. The reunion planning group have so enjoyed meeting together that we will continue to keep in touch and catch up over coffee from time to time.

Christian Sawyer (née Redford)



MEDICAL MUSINGS



YEN YEE CHONG (1972 – 1979)

“AI” Artificial Intelligence – Two Years On ...

Hello, and very nice to meet you. I do have some bad news for Alan Freedman: I don't exist and I am really just an Avatar in cyberspace. So, in the new age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), how many can truly say that they have “spoken” to a human expert online? You may even suspect one day, that the friendly nurse or doctor expert online is just a computer AI back-end with a pretty Avatar front-end.

What does that mean in everyday terms? It'll generally have stemmed from a rich and well-staffed large (USA?) corporation taking the accumulated expert data from some “knowledge base”, then distilling or data-mining downwards to create logical reasoning or algorithms. Now, where good old, traditional AI dullards like me were wedded to linear data-mining forward-chaining:

Premise A ==> Premise B ==>
Conclusion C,
the new AI nerds in Silicon Valley etc. are creating logical algorithms that transcend ABC into nuanced human-thinking e.g. Google.



How does this affect Alan Freedman and everyday Hendonians in the street? Before answering, I'd remind ourselves of the school motto: *Omnia Discendo Vinces* – By learning you will conquer everything. We live in an AI-rich world where knowledge equals wealth. Whereas Deep Thought used to be a fun chess project for IBM, Google, ChatGPT, Elon Musk *et al* are generating AI models at affordable

prices, that provide data solutions in many social and economic activities.



Example: Former Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak sold or “lent” the client-rich British NHS database to USA data analytics firm

Palantir to implement logical synthesis. Their models mimic doctors’ reasoning over your illness or malaise. So, a radiologist asks daily of medical scans: “Is that a cancer, or is it a benign growth?” Doctors have to decide drug dosages, or painkillers etc, and whether to send the patient to surgery or not. These are discussions that occur between human experts a million times daily across the globe. The NHS and big health enterprises have all developed process models that can model hierarchies or chains of authority and reporting. How AI computer models fit in, this has yet to be decided fully.

One business driver can be:

“Damn the doctors, they were always making trouble and protesting. Sack them and employ computer AI; it's cheaper.”

But ... how far does AI go? Any options to backtrack if AI endangers patient health and fails miserably? These are serious social and political issues that sit quietly, until they blow up in our faces.

Other Industries Affected:

Viewing industrial dynamic shifts, we saw Customer Service Centres (CSCs) as a big opportunity for offshoring. AI and Avatar usage in CSCs challenges the need to recruit talking and thinking humans. Similarly, legal databases offer huge opportunities in data-mining of legal cases and precedents by computer, so ChatGPT *et al* generate legal paperwork that threaten generations of paralegal and admin employment.

Doing your annual income, VAT or payroll taxes? Don’t employ a human. Just buy or rent AI-led accounting that will feast on your financial datasets to deliver tax-compliant declarations.

There’s a plethora of opportunities for AI-created Sales and Marketing blurb with nice glossy digital media to entice zillions of customers. AI models learn from both successful and failed marketing experiences, so computers programme iterative refinement, using neural and



semantic frameworks into (say) ChatGPT to write ever more attractive Sales and Marketing blarney.

Can we foresee the future?

Next generations of AI are somewhat oversold: “Better, smarter, cheaper and faster than humans ever will be. Forget humans – use computer AI instead.”

Funnily enough, I was debating this with one of my patients I treated in my Chinese TCM and Shiatsu clinic. Then, Babylon Health was a famous digital health start-up that fronted AI chatbots and remote telemedicine from USA. We were debating the complexities of data mining from messy patient text and image data into actionable doctor’s recommendations. Babylon was using AI probability models from Bayesian dependencies forming medical conclusions for patients, including NHS. Babylon claimed its AI diagnostic engine was as accurate, if not more so, than human doctors – and it could operate 24/7 without sleeping. See the attraction to lay off high-salaried human doctors? Babylon had a big sale with NHS, but its performance was debatable, so controversial that it eventually collapsed into bankruptcy in 2023.



Conclusions

I do not doubt that remote telecoms and computer AI-influenced decisions will transform economies. CSCs, Sales / Marketing, Legal, Accounting work, once human tasks, will become more AI-formed. How accurate AI output and algorithms will be, beyond mere pattern recognition and advisory services, will be debatable. Certainly, AI computers will be greeted and opposed by humans for whom AI rival work solutions are to be feared for staff redundancies, and even combated.

In my field, I see formulating AI medical solutions at or beyond the doctor’s competence or remit as being controversial, and these will be opposed. The AI business modelling future is unclear, vis-à-vis working with humans. Yet, professed benefits of buying cheaper untiring 24/7 medical systems will no doubt logically seduce hospital directors and clinic owners across the world for generations.



Dear Old Hendonians,

It is a real pleasure to share this latest snapshot of life at Hendon School — a collection of moments that captures the energy, ambition and warmth of our community. From unforgettable cultural experiences, including a rare chance to see elite Sumo wrestlers at the Royal Albert Hall, to students embracing global learning through our Japan visit, and from courageous Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to sporting successes across the year groups, we have so much to celebrate.

Alongside these highlights, you will also see the values that continue to define Hendon in action: sustainability through our growing pre-loved uniform initiative, creativity through art and performance, and thoughtful reflection through visits and projects that deepen understanding of history, identity and community.

We hope these stories bring back fond memories, and keep you connected to the school you will always be part of.

With warmest regards

Rhona Povey

Craig McGuire

Headteachers, Hendon School

Global Learning, Culture and the Arts

Sumo Trip to the Royal Albert Hall

In October, over forty leading Sumo wrestlers from Japan visited London for a five-day tournament—the first time they had competed in the UK in 34 years. On Friday 17 October, 28 of our students enjoyed the opportunity to watch the wrestlers in action at the Royal Albert Hall in central London. It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience one of Japan's most iconic sports, and we came away not only entertained, but with a deeper understanding of traditional Japanese culture.



Eleven Days in Japan: Our Students Embrace a World of Tradition and Adventure

Sixteen students departed from Gatwick bound for Japan, travelling with Air China via Shanghai to Tokyo.

We began with three nights in accommodation at the former 1964 Tokyo Olympic Village. From there, we explored some of Tokyo's most vibrant districts, where the night-time lights make the streets feel almost like daytime. We also visited the world's busiest junction, where thousands cross at once — fitting for a city of around 33 million people.

Our students immersed themselves in Japanese culture, from enjoying traditional food to visiting temples and shrines across the city.

Shibuya, Shinjuku, Harajuku and Yoyogi Park were particular highlights, and for many manga readers and anime fans, these places felt wonderfully familiar.



Culture Day 2026 – A Celebration of Identity, Heritage and Community

On Friday 6 February, we celebrated our third annual Culture Day — now a much-anticipated fixture in our school calendar.

Once again, the day was a vibrant reflection of the diversity, pride and community spirit within our school.

In the lead-up, students produced an outstanding range of posters for our cultural boards, demonstrating creativity, passion and deep understanding of culture and heritage.

Our Student Leadership Team played a central role, advertising the event, planning activities, and creating quizzes and cultural tasks for mentoring and lessons across the school.

On the day itself, there was a real buzz across the building as students arrived in cultural dress, representing a rich range of traditions, identities and heritage.

Over lunchtime, our student henna artists completed more than 300 designs, and cultural volunteers hosted stalls to share knowledge and offer tasters of traditional foods.



Creative Arts Christmas Showcase

On Wednesday 17 December, our Creative Arts Department presented its annual Christmas Showcase.

Music students from Years 7 to 12 performed a varied programme to an enthusiastic audience of parents, staff, students and friends.

The evening reflected many hours of rehearsal and practice, and it was a joyful celebration of our students' talent and hard work.



PDS (Provision for Deaf Students) Trip to County Hall

On Thursday 26 February, our PDS students and staff attended Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution* at County Hall.

Staged in the former Greater London Council chamber, the production transformed the space into an atmospheric recreation of the Old Bailey, drawing the audience into the heart of the courtroom drama.

Students were captivated by the suspenseful twists, sharp dialogue and distinctive staging, and for many it was a rare opportunity to experience theatre in such a historically significant setting.

We were especially grateful that the trip was made possible by the generosity of two PDS students who donated their Jack Petchey Award prize money to support the visit.

Sustainability and Community

Hendon School Joins the "School Uniform Reuse Network"

We were proud to join the School Uniform Reuse Network, strengthening our commitment to sustainability and to supporting families.

After running our Pre-Loved Uniform Shop for the September 2025 start, we were delighted to share the impact our community helped us achieve:

- 25.7 kg of waste diverted from landfill
- 98.8 kg of CO₂ emissions prevented
- £855.58 saved by families

Thank you to everyone who donated pre-loved uniform items.

We were also thrilled to be in the running for cash prizes and a student textile workshop — an exciting opportunity to extend eco-conscious learning even further.

Every uniform reused is a step towards a greener future.

Leadership, Voice and Enrichment

Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge

Sixty of our Year 10 students took part in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge.

Speakers Trust leaders joined us for two full days of workshops, supporting students to craft, structure and confidently deliver impactful speeches.

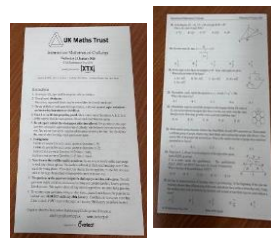
Across the programme, students produced an impressive range of thoughtful, powerful and persuasive speeches, and eight students were selected as winners.



Learning Beyond the Classroom (Academic and Creative)

UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge

On Wednesday 28 January, forty of our top mathematicians in Years 9–11 took part in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. Students were selected by their teachers based on their aptitude shown in lessons, and they tackled 25 multiple-choice questions designed to stretch problem-solving skills. Prizes were due to be awarded for Best in Year and Best in School, alongside Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates for students meeting the thresholds.



Year 12 & 13 Trip to UCL (University College London)

On Wednesday 4 February, our students visited UCL and heard from speakers working in a wide range of fascinating fields.

We explored research topics including laughter across cultures, autism and perception, and studies of sadness and empathy, with links to RE themes such as the soul and dualism.

After lunch, we visited the office of Anthony Julius, who spoke about his work as a high-profile lawyer (including representing Princess Diana) and his involvement in a well-known Holocaust-denial libel case later filmed as a documentary.

Overall, the trip offered a valuable insight into the diversity of opportunities available beyond school.

EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) Class Trip to the University of Southampton

On Tuesday 3 March, our EPQ class visited the University of Southampton to strengthen research skills and support project work.

We were introduced to Google Scholar and learned how to identify reliable sources and select useful academic material, making research feel clearer and more organised.

We also explored the campus and visited the university library, learning how to locate information in books and use the library system, and students found texts relevant to their EPQ topics. The trip boosted confidence and helped students develop their projects with stronger research foundations.



Library News

For a full half term, our library was buzzing with activities, events and new projects.

National Year of Reading 2026: “Go All In”

This year's theme, “Go All In”, encouraged everyone to embrace their interests: “If you're into it, read into it.”

We looked forward to running our established programmes alongside new initiatives from the National Literacy Trust.

Year 9 Young City Poets: Update

We received all entries for the National Literacy Trust's Young City Poets programme, and were delighted by the quality and range of students' writing.

Five students were selected for publication, three were invited to perform live at St Paul's Cathedral on 19 March, and four students planned to attend as audience members.

To celebrate every participant, we also planned to publish an anthology compiling all pieces, alongside certificates and achievement points.

Year 7 STEM Reading Challenge: Launch

Our Year 7 STEM Reading Challenge launched, inviting students to design an eco-friendly green community space (realistic or imaginative) while building early research skills.

We encouraged families to follow our monthly library newsletter for updates, and we wished everyone a restful half-term break.

Year 9 Day of the Dead Project

Our Year 9 students explored Mexican traditions through Frida Kahlo's work and Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead).

Building on clay-modelling techniques introduced in Year 8, students designed and sculpted imaginative skull models, which were then fired and glazed.

The finished work showcased creativity and craftsmanship, while deepening understanding of cultural symbolism and artistic expression.



Art and Photography News – Year 8 Photography Curriculum Extension Group

Our Year 8 Photography Curriculum Extension Group explored studio portraiture, using lighting and flowers as props to create striking images.

The work highlighted impressive teamwork and developing camera skills.



A-Level Geographers Explore Brick Lane

Our A-Level geographers took part in a field trip with Queen Mary University of London, bringing the Edexcel Diverse Places module and NEA fieldwork skills to life through first-hand investigation.

Led by Kate Amis, we explored Brick Lane and Spitalfields, focusing on change over time through historical photographs and paintings, and developing techniques for visual analysis and qualitative data collection. We also examined the Huguenot, Jewish and Bangladeshi migration histories that shaped the area, and how successive communities have imprinted their identities on the neighbourhood.



Banglatown vs. North Brick Lane: A Living Case Study in Gentrification



In Banglatown, students observed strong cultural markers and limited regeneration, including motifs and murals, ethnic food shops and restaurants, remittance services and community-owned gentrification such as hipster cafés, artisan bakeries, experience shops, pop-ups and boutique studios. Moving north, the contrast was striking, with visible signs of banks.

Using a GOAD map, students annotated land-use change and noted that around 80% of shops at the northern end of Brick Lane had changed in the past decade, illustrating the pace of urban transformation.

Spitalfields: The Epitome of Regeneration

In Spitalfields, students reflected on the social and economic tensions between long-standing communities and incoming higher-income groups, the challenge of preserving cultural heritage amid redevelopment, and how place meaning shifts as land use and demographics evolve.

An Annual Tradition in the Making

Given the academic, cultural and personal richness of the day, we plan for this to become an annual fixture in our A-Level Geography calendar.

Remembrance, Identity and Social Justice

Year 12 Students Visit Auschwitz-Birkenau

On Wednesday 22 October, four of our Year 12 students visited Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp in Poland to deepen their understanding of the Holocaust beyond classroom study.

The visit offered an opportunity to reflect on one of history's darkest periods and on the importance of remembrance, with a personal account from Zainab capturing the profound impact of experiencing the site first-hand.



A Visit We'll Never Forget: Our Trip to the Synagogue

Our visit to the synagogue became one of the most meaningful experiences of the year, deepening our understanding of Jewish history, traditions and the lasting impact of the Holocaust. We explored Jewish ceremonial objects, watched short films that made the human reality of the Holocaust feel immediate, and took part in discussions about how we challenge discrimination and bullying today.

Meeting a World War Two survivor was a powerful highlight, reminding us why remembering the past remains so important, and why fighting antisemitism and all forms of prejudice still matters. Overall, it was an eye-opening, thought-provoking visit we will remember for a long time.



Year 12 RE Students Attend a Special Educational Event at Chelsea Football Club



On Tuesday 27 January, our Year 12 RE students attended an educational event at Chelsea Football Club focused on antisemitism, racial discrimination and the role football can play in promoting social justice.

Accompanied by Mr Pollack and Ms Sooknanan, students delivered a carefully researched presentation on the club's history and its commitment to tackling prejudice on and off the pitch, and were praised for being articulate, poised and knowledgeable.

The day offered a powerful real-world insight into how sport can challenge discrimination and promote allyship, education and responsibility.

2026 Holocaust Remembrance Day: "Bridging Generations" (Library Event)

On Tuesday 27 January, a group of our Year 7 students joined a live conversation in the library between Holocaust survivor Ruth Barnett and author Tom Palmer.

It was a meaningful opportunity for our younger pupils to learn history from lived experience and reflect on the importance of remembrance.

Inclusion and Belonging

Hendon Autistic Resource Provision (HARP) Trip – Neurodiversity Week Event

To mark Neurodiversity Week, the Autism Advisory Service hosted a borough-wide social event on Friday 6 March at Church End Library for students from ARPs across the borough, and our HARP students enjoyed meeting new people and taking part in a wide range of activities.

Students explored a fascinating selection of animals, joined in arts and crafts, and enjoyed e-sports activities and a popular silent disco.



Our students represented the school exceptionally well and were praised for polite and respectful behaviour throughout, making the event a positive experience that supported social development while celebrating neurodiversity.

Outdoor Challenge and Character

Hendon's D of E Girls Conquer Ashdown Forest



Twelve determined students completed their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expedition in Ashdown Forest, navigating hills, heaths and the occasional wrong turn using maps, compasses and strong teamwork developed through weeks of training. Unpredictable weather and challenging terrain tested resilience, and even moments of getting lost were met with humour and grit. With support from Mr Ramjhon, Mr Dickie and Ms Raghvani, the expedition was a triumph of endurance and camaraderie — and returning to Hendon was sweetened with celebratory bubble tea!

Special congratulations go to six students who, as of 20 October, officially completed their full Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards:



- Adriana (10.3)
- Hana (10.3)
- Sahar Moghnieh (10.3)
- Minhaal (10.1)
- Sophie (10.6)
- Manel (10.7)

Sport and Physical Achievement (Grouped)

Girls' Football (Years 7–11)

We enjoyed an excellent start to the girls' football season, with over fifty students attending training each week and participation continuing to grow.

We fielded competitive teams across Years 7 to 11 in the Barnet School Leagues, ensuring that girls throughout the school had the chance to represent Hendon in fixtures.

Training remained open to all abilities — from beginners to experienced club players — and our partnership with Barnet Panthers continued to provide a strong pathway for students looking to develop further outside school.

Years 7 & 8

Our Years 7 and 8 team made a strong start as a newly formed group, building cohesion and learning to work effectively together.

In their opening match against Belmont, they showed teamwork, determination and a growing understanding of the game.

Year 9

Our Year 9 team started superbly, winning their first two matches and sitting top of the league at that stage. Training attendance was exceptional, and the team applied tactics and skills learned in sessions to improve match performance, showing excellent attitude and spirit.



Years 10 & 11



Our Years 10 and 11 team began the season with momentum, combining returning experience with new recruits making their debuts.

The team showcased resilience and quality in both attack and defence, with special mention to Olivia for standout goalkeeping, and to Chloe for outstanding work rate across the pitch.

Year 8 Boys Basketball

After an unbeaten season and a league championship, our Year 8 boys returned determined to defend their title.

In their first match against Finchley Catholic, the team started slowly, but soon found rhythm after the first quarter and produced an excellent display of teamwork, communication and spirit. We secured a 43–18 win — an impressive start to the season — while remaining unbeaten, with MVP (most valuable player) recognition for Mehran and Alistone.



Trampolining Success at the Regional Schools Competition

For one half term, our trampolining squad competed in the annual Regional Schools Trampolining Competition with students from Years 7–11.

After weeks of training, students performed with confidence, focus and determination, representing the school superbly and enjoying strong results.

Results:

- Years 7 & 8 Girls – Silver
- Year 9 Girls – Bronze
- Year 9 Boys – Gold
- Rayan – Individual Silver

Training continued next term, and students who wished to continue beyond school were signposted to courses at Hendon Leisure Centre.



Year 8 Boys Crowned Rugby Cup Champions

The half term concluded a four-week rugby cup competition for our Year 8 boys, delivered in partnership with the Saracens Foundation. Across the competition, we were hugely impressed by the team's commitment, organisation and teamwork both on and off the field.

Many players were relatively new to rugby, having developed skills primarily through PE lessons, yet the team finished top of the competition, winning out of ten teams. We also celebrated the strong start made by our Year 7 boys, and recommended Finchley Rugby Club as an inclusive, supportive option for students keen to develop further outside school.



Celebration and Rewards

Celebrating Excellence at Our Annual Awards Ceremony



On Tuesday 21 October, we hosted our annual Awards Evening in the Quad at Middlesex University, celebrating 130 exceptional students nominated by their teachers across a wide range of categories.

The evening brought together pupils, families and staff in a warm atmosphere of pride and excitement, recognising hard work, resilience and dedication.

A particularly poignant moment was

our tribute to Patrick Guthrie, a much-loved former English teacher who passed away last year, with his family joining us and a new award introduced in his memory.

We were also honoured to welcome former pupil Fred Varley as our guest speaker, now a physicist working in nuclear medicine and radioactive medicines used in diagnostics and cancer treatments, who shared inspiring reflections for the next generation.



Year 7 Reward Trip to Babylon Park

On Wednesday 10 December, 23 of our Year 7 students visited Babylon Park in Camden as a reward linked to achievement points, attendance, punctuality and positive conduct around school. Students enjoyed an action-packed day of rollercoasters and arcade games, and it was wonderful to see them celebrating their success together.



FROM THE SCHOOL ARCHIVIST

Your Archivist records grateful thanks to **Philip Churcher** (1946 – 1954) for various photographs – including the one below – and other school memorabilia to add to the considerable material he has kindly donated to the archive collection in previous years.

Many thanks, in addition, to everyone else who has provided digitised copies of material by email over the past twelve months.

These valuable donations to the school archives are greatly appreciated.

If any of our readers has kept form photos from the 1960s and early 1970s, they would be of particular interest to your Archivist, whether in hard copy or digital format. That is because, at present, the archives do not include many form photos from that period compared to, say, the late 1940s and early to mid 1950s. This is of more than purely academic interest: your Archivist has been on the receiving end of more than one request for such form photos recently, but he has largely found himself unable to assist.

Alan Freedman

Please send all communications to:

Alan Freedman – Honorary Archivist to Hendon School
c/o Hendon School, Golders Rise, Hendon, London NW4 2HP
freedmana@hendonschool.co.uk



UPPER SIXTH FORM PHOTO – SUMMER 1954

Back row, left to right: Peter Lambert, Sidney Hass, Alan Allpress, John Tresman, Alan Solomon, Ron Box, Alan Mason, Laurie Taylor, Barry Sinclair, Malcolm Brooks.

Middle row, left to right: Philip Churcher, Brian Worboys, Hans Steiner, Cecil Jager, Ralph Naylor, Robin Hale, Malcolm Bremner, Tony Forster, Eric Tapp.

Front row, left to right: Muriel Sargent, Ann Ince, Margo Dane, Pat Jennings, Muriel Jesset, Ann Borthwick, Pauline Parker, Mr MacDonald, Valerie Matthews, Renée Zell, Erika Otte, Ena Adams, Gerda Rand, Kathleen Street.



FROM THE ARCHIVES



GOLLUM

Lonely in a galaxy of colour
His miserable self reflected
In the waters of stark moonlight. Figure of colour
Seeking evil with delight.

There he sits on cold steps,
Gollum, and gnaws a fish and spits out the bones,
Looking into unknown depths,
Sniffing the stench with a cackling moan.

He fears and loves pain
And can think only in shadow and fog,
Loathing light and cleansing rain,
A dweller of wasteland and bog.

For ever sentenced to doom
In a life of weary sin,
Despairing when the sun does loom
In his frenzied search for the precious ring.

Jeremy Smookler – Form 5C

*Taken from the 1973 edition of the school magazine
Gollum is a fictitious character (a “hobbit”) from Lord of the Rings
The form photo on page 35 was taken around the same time*



It is with heartfelt regret that we report the following deaths. Our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy go to all families and friends, together with grateful thanks to all who have provided information. If you would like to add anything for inclusion in a future issue, please contact your editor.

Ashleigh Brilliant (1947 – 1952) – armchair laureate, newspaper columnist, soft-spoken iconoclast, late-blooming hippie, short-form rhapsodist, loyal and regular contributor to the *Old Hendonian* ... and probably the world's only known epigrammatist – passed away on 24th September, 2025, aged 91. What follows is adapted from a write-up in the *Montecito Journal*.



Born in 1933, in London, to Victor and Amelia Brilliant (as has been noted in countless articles, *Brilliant* is not a *nom de plume* but Ashleigh's real family name), Ashleigh's fairly typical childhood took a turn in 1939 when the steamroller that would become World War 2 forced him, his mother, and his younger sister Myrna to leave the UK for his mother's hometown of Toronto. The three moved to the USA in 1941 and made a home in Washington DC, where they were joined by Victor after a separation of several years. The family returned to England in 1947, settling in Edgware, when Ashleigh joined Hendon County. He travelled to the USA with a friend in the summer of 1951, and hitch-hiked across the country: the American boomtown energy was a striking contrast to the relatively monochrome postwar austerity of the UK, even so soon after the war.

Having earned a degree in History from University College London (UCL), Ashleigh returned to the States in 1956 – this time permanently. He settled first in Los Angeles, first taking a Masters degree at Claremont Graduate School in 1957, then earning a Ph.D in History

and Geography from UC Berkeley. He became a naturalised American citizen in 1969.

Ashleigh's forays into teaching were not fruitful. Prior to his Berkeley Ph.D, he engaged in a "mercifully brief career teaching English at Hollywood High School in Los Angeles" as he put it. Following Berkeley, he taught at Central Oregon College (1964 – 65), and was ultimately fired from that post for playing a recording of Allen Ginsburg's controversial beat poem "Howl" for a group of students. He'd been warned. At Chapman University's bidding, his final formal teaching gigs were at the behest of Chapman's *University of the Seven Seas* (today called Semester at Sea).

Ashleigh taught History and Geography aboard the refitted cruise ship, liberally referred to by the school as a "floating university." Dr. Brilliant and his respective student cohorts (and a bemused ship's crew, we can imagine) sailed twice around the world, each session lasting 3½ months. It was on that second session that he met his future wife Dorothy (1932 – 2018), a fellow teacher.



By 1967, he and Dorothy had made their way to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, arguable object of Scott McKenzie's popular and instructive tune that year: "*San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)*." In the hothouse atmosphere of that place and time, Ashleigh the restless Creative would stumble artfully into the remainder of his life. Holding court on Hippie Hill ("I was a big pacifist, so I liked to spread ideas about peace,") Ashleigh Brilliant was morphing, and began to self-identify

as “a public thinker.” When, with Dorothy’s dedicated assistance, he launched Pot-Shots® in Haight-Ashbury that year (he originally referred to his epigrams as “Unpoemed Titles”) – Ashleigh Brilliant had found his footing, and a way to express his granular life credo.



He and Dorothy moved to Santa Barbara in 1973 to be close to her parents. They’d married twice: once in Tijuana and once in San Francisco. When Dorothy passed away in 2018, they’d been married 51 years.

Ashleigh’s warmly cantankerous, wholly loving, and deeply curious journey through life would not be mistaken for anyone else’s. Predeceased by his mother and father and his younger sister, Myrna – the livewire that was Ashleigh Brilliant is gone.

The following is taken from a write-up in *Noozhawk*, a Santa Barbara county newspaper: Ashleigh was one of a kind. A long-time member of Mensa, a dedicated scholar and lifelong learner, there wasn’t a moment in any day when his mind or body were idle. Most of his hours were spent researching any topic one could think of. Ashleigh appreciated music of all types, poetry, almost all literature, fine arts, the performing arts, and old movies. He disliked excessive noise, pollution, and above all he despised noise pollution.

Beginning in the 1970s, Ash took part in a campaign to ban leaf blowers, blaming them for unnecessary noise and dust. He stepped up his game in the late 1990s, forming BLAST or Ban Leaf Blowers and Save our Town, whose ballot initiative in November 1997 led to a ban on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the city of Santa Barbara. This civic reform was one of Ashleigh’s proudest accomplishments.

Ashleigh was complex. He had definite opinions and made them known to friends, family, and

anyone he cared to share them with. His core beliefs were rooted in philosophy, science, religion, aesthetics and experience.

That’s not to say he was religious. In fact, Ashleigh was a self-declared atheist. An atheist with a startling command of the Old Testament and the New.

Raised in a Jewish household, Ashleigh was familiar with Jewish spiritual values, teachings, customs and traditions. As a result of his years of world travel and study, he understood and appreciated the religious and cultural traditions of many peoples and societies around the world.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH
ABOUT RELIGION,
BUT I KNOW WHAT
I DON'T BELIEVE.

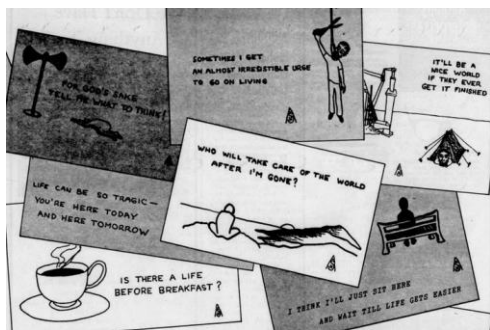
BRILLIANT
BRILLIANT



Despite his rejection of organised religion, Ashleigh never shied away from a discussion or examination of religious or philosophical principles.

Ashleigh was a man who adhered strictly to the codes of conduct he believed in, and almost nothing could sway him from a firm belief or a routine to which he had dedicated himself. One particularly charming example of this was his daily diary writing.

On his tenth birthday, Ashleigh was given a diary in which he immediately began to write about his daily activities, thoughts and musings. During his 80-plus ensuing years, there were no more than a handful of days in which Ashleigh failed to write in his diary. This inaction was always due to logistical inability, never to a lack of desire. Ashleigh was a well-known local author, epigrammatist and the creator of *Pot Shots*, postcards with witty and amusing sayings. All epigrams penned and published by Ashleigh were required to conform to rigid rules, including: they must be no longer than 17 words (the same length as Japanese haiku); there must be no blatant reference to current political events, fashion or fads; there must be no rhyming or use of puns; the sentiment must be perpetual, universal and easily translatable; and the maximum number of Pot Shots was capped at 10,000 (which he hit years ago).



Another hard and fast rule Ashleigh lived by was that no one could use his copyrighted material without prior permission. If he found unauthorised use of his work, Ashleigh tenaciously went after the plagiarizer through legal means, seeking monetary compensation. He won many lawsuits, some against huge corporations. The author of many books, Ashleigh was also a long-time columnist for the *Montecito Journal*, writing a weekly column called “Brilliant Thoughts.” The column was submitted every Thursday morning directly after Ashleigh had read the previous week’s column in the paper. As with his epigrams, his articles conformed strictly to a self-imposed set of rules: nothing political, nothing faddish, nothing specifically related to current events, no commercial interest or intent, no repeat information or topic, and the article had to be exactly 750 words in length.

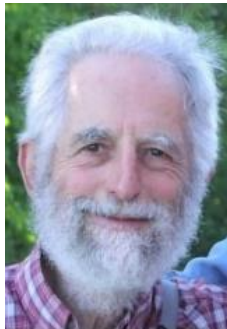
The essays were written months before publication, to keep them from being topical. If a column seemed particularly relevant to the times, it was purely by coincidence.

Ashleigh has a Wikipedia page as well as a [website](#), both of which have historical information about him and his work. *[The website is well worth a visit: it includes links to family letters as well as to detailed diaries from his schooldays at Hendon County – Ed.]*

During the years following Dorothy’s death, Ashleigh had daily helpers, all of whom eventually learned to balance companionship and care with Ashleigh’s demand for independence and autonomy.

His helpers supported Ashleigh during his two daily around-the-block walks, as well as during the walks he made from his home near the Old Mission to his West Valerio Street office. The long walks to the office stopped in 2024, but the neighbourhood walks were never subject to

cancellation. Rain or shine, even if it meant following behind Ashleigh in the car as he made his way from point A to point B, his helper was there to ensure his safe arrival at point B.



In the last several years of his life, Ashleigh’s helpers became his friends, confidants and protectors. Each offered Ashleigh a different gift and type of support, which he appreciated and expressed gratitude for.

Throughout his lifetime, the evenings belonged solely to Ashleigh. Up until the end, he independently made his own dinner, wrote his evening diary entry, and prepared for a restful sleep. Lifelong routines and rituals provided Ashleigh with a level of comfort, helping him maintain clarity of mind and personal independence.

If Ashleigh had prepared for his death, he would have written a meaningful obituary acknowledging and thanking his many friends, fans and helpers. But alas, he was too busy researching or writing his next article, or gathering thoughts for his next email blast to thousands of fans and readers.

Without a doubt, Ashleigh would have humbly thanked his good friend Sol for their enduring friendship and the constant supply of *New Yorker* magazines. He would also have thanked Chasity, his “angel” helper who, for the last three years, kept him on the straight and narrow path of making the most of each day and being grateful for the health he enjoyed.

Peter Jerram (1944 – 1949) passed away on the same day – 24th September, 2025 – aged 92. His daughter, Fran Woodhouse, has kindly sent the following pictures and wording from his eulogy.

Peter John Jerram was born on Good Friday, 15th April 1933. His mother was the daughter of a German immigrant lady and a native Londoner; and his father hailed from rural West Berkshire, reportedly a stronghold for Jerrams. He was a cheerful, courteous and creative boy, who enjoyed the companionship of his elder sister, Patricia.

During his early years, Peter developed a neurological condition called “Sydenham’s



Chorea” which manifested as the physically dramatic “St Vitus Dance.” This resulted in sporadic school attendance.

Rather than submitting to the humiliating stigma of a nervous disorder, Peter was dubiously comforted in being told that he only needed to spend half the time in school because he was twice as

clever! Such a flattering explanation gave birth to an unshakeable self-confidence, which was to serve him faithfully for the rest of his life!

His childhood home was right next door to Hendon Aerodrome. In the summer of 1940, his house was frequently bombed out in the Nazi quest to ruin the runway.

At the height of the Battle of Britain, seven-year-old Peter scrambled up a very exposed mound, and furiously brandished a homemade wooden sword at Jerry overhead.

Just as throwing a stone across a field is said to change the balance of the Earth, perhaps Peter’s defiant swordplay influenced the ongoing battle – in favour of the Allies!

He survived the onslaught, needless to say, and attended Hendon County Grammar School, where he thrived and passed his School Certificate. This brought great joy to his father, who considered it a privilege for him to leave school at sixteen, when he had to leave at fourteen – and work.

Peter was a popular youth with a vibrant social life. He was an active member of St Alphage Church, where he made several lifelong friends, sadly outliving them all.

He was married to Elizabeth for 53 years. She was both his wisest counsellor and his harshest critic, keeping him in line when his irrepressible spirit threatened to get the better of him. He was a devoted family man with three diverse children: Mark, Andrew and Frances. As a cherished grandfather to James and Steven, he took an active role in their early care. In addition to adoring his own dogs Cindy and Lucy, he delighted in his daughter’s five German Shepherds, whom he called his “granddogs.”

Peter had an interesting and varied working life, starting off with the secretive London

Laboratories in the early 1950s, under the kindly mentorship of Professor Sir Robert Williams. He then joined BOAC at Heathrow Airport in 1960, and enjoyed several decades of jet-setting in his role as an International Hygiene Inspector. He took his family on numerous foreign trips, courtesy of the perk of free flights – most memorably to New York, Malta and Switzerland – broadening their minds considerably. With an ever-increasing expertise in his field, he was promoted to Principal Hygiene Adviser at British Airways. He had become by then – at least according to his own humble estimation – the world’s leading authority on Aviation Hygiene ... life was good!

He stayed with British Airways until 1992, and was blessed with a long and happy retirement, equal in years to his entire airline career. In his domestic life, Peter was a competent carpenter and versatile handyman. He worked hard and always advised that achievement brought the greatest satisfaction.

He built an interior wall with his own hands to create a study bedroom for one of his sons, from his dining room. The wall went up with no formal planning, and was an impeccably robust and rock-solid structure. Nevertheless, what goes up must come down, and the house’s subsequent owner grudgingly complained that dismantling the wretched thing had surely been the greater achievement!

Peter’s humour was somewhat mischievous, which could be inappropriate, raising more than a few eyebrows along the way.

During a ferocious heatwave in 1979, he attended his own father’s cremation. Towards the end of the service, his sister sighed wearily and remarked “It’s so hot in here,” whereupon Peter put her discomfort in perspective by replying “not half as hot as Dad will be in a minute!”

Freemasonry was very important to him, and he valued and respected its wealth of differing religious identities. He always came home in a mood of profound contentment after spending an evening with his loyal and esteemed brethren. It made him a better person, and was a vital component of his social life.

In the last nine years after losing his beloved wife, he joined the University of the Third Age. His likeable personality won him additional friends in the Scrabble, wine-tasting, singing and singleton groups. Membership relieved his loneliness to



some extent, and was very beneficial to his general health.

To sum up, Peter was a kind, generous and endearing man. Although he will be dearly missed, the affection he inspired is more than enough to celebrate and appreciate his very special contribution.

Jeremy Smookler (1968 – 1973) – an old classmate of your Editor – passed away in March 2026.

He will forever remain in your Editor's memory as a young man endowed with a head of abundant



dark curly hair, who had an appetite for testing convention when he felt he could. Take this 1973 photo of Form 5C as an example, where Jeremy is standing far right in the front row: he is wearing a mischievous smile, flared trousers – very much the fashion of the times – with a dark shirt and no tie ... and holding up two fingers at the camera, which had to be discreetly edited out!

The previous November, Jeremy lost the final of the school chess tournament to **Dr Philip Corbin (1968 – 1975)**, another of our old classmates, having beaten your Editor comprehensively in the semi-finals.

The fourth form group which went on the school cruise in November 1971 included Jeremy and another old classmate **David Ellis (1968 – 1975)** – pictured far left in the second row of the form 5C photo above – who recalls going round the canals and squares of Venice in rather damp, dreary weather with Jeremy and a group of other students, when they encountered a large group of Italian boys who were shouting and trying to intimidate and bother them. Jeremy came to the fore, and announced he would challenge any of them to a hand-wrestle match. He duly won the bout, and twisted back the fingers of at least one Italian youth.

Back on board the ship, the captain announced plans to leave port early, as several incidents ashore meant that a large group of Italian youths were on the quayside shouting – and that at least one chair had been thrown over the side of the ship at the approaching horde ... but not necessarily by any member of the school group!

Last year's obituaries included **Bob Avis (1937 – 1942)** who passed away aged 99.

John Barnett (1950 – 1955) writes:

I was sad to read about Bob Avis whom I met over the years at reunions, and clearly remember him when I used to watch Hendon FC in those golden years when they won the FA Amateur Cup on at least two occasions. He was always known to us as Tiger Avis.



HENDON SCHOOL



*Photo:
Frank Cooper*

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THE OLD HENDONIAN

== INCORPORATING ==

**HENDON, HENDON COUNTY GRAMMAR, ST DAVID'S COUNTY SECONDARY,
BRENT MODERN AND BARNFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Editor: Alan Freedman

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letters: care of the School

Material for inclusion in the next edition should reach Alan Freedman by 31 March, 2027



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