



Westcliff High School for Boys

Alumni Network Newsletter

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Issue 8 - Summer 2019

WELCOME FROM THE HEADMASTER, MIKE SKELLY

I am delighted to welcome you to the eighth edition of the WHSB Alumni Network Newsletter. It is now three years since the launch of the School's Community Development Office (CDO) in 2016). I am pleased to report that work with our alumni, business and wider local communities and primary schools, the CDO Team's key areas of focus, continues to progress.

As we fast approach 2020, the School's Centenary year, our attention turns towards the events planned to celebrate this most historic moment. Many thousands of people have passed through the School during the last century, and we now have the wonderful privilege of being here when our School becomes 100 years old. This privilege is also a responsibility for the current WHSB community (the pupils, staff, governors, parents, Old Westcliffians, friends and members of our wider community) to ensure that this significant milestone for the School is celebrated appropriately. Many of our current pupils will be the first member of their family to attend WHSB, whereas many others will have followed in the footsteps of previous generations within their families, in attending the School. Whatever the length of a family's connection with WHSB, each generation attending owes so much to the work and determination of previous generations of Old Westcliffians.

We are most fortunate to have the support of our Patrons for the

Centenary, Lord Petre (former Lord Lieutenant of Essex) and Lord Gold (Old Westcliffian). We are delighted that they will be visiting the School and attending some of the planned events included in the extensive programme which will be published in due course.

Tickets are now on sale for the Centenary Gala Dinner, the Official Launch event at the Cliffs Pavilion, on Saturday 1 February 2020. We would be delighted if you are able to join us and further details are contained in this newsletter. In addition to the Official Launch night, we shall also be holding a joint Garden Party with Westcliff High School for Girls, a series of special lectures, concerts, drama productions and exhibitions. As mentioned in an earlier edition of the Alumni Network Newsletter, we are also delighted that former Deputy Headmaster, Dr Alan White, whom many of you will remember, has agreed to write a book covering the School's history and this will be released in 2020. Dr White is a highly regarded author in his field, so we are privileged to have his support with this project. We shall also be making available some limited-edition, commemorative items, such as Centenary School ties. Further details will be available shortly on the School's website.

The School's Centenary affords us the opportunity to fundraise. You will know that, within the Education sector, funding remains under pressure in real terms, and we hope



that the Centenary Fund will enable us to upgrade the School's sporting and recreational facilities. Whilst I have been able to engage positively with the Department for Education regarding developments to our classrooms, Sixth Form and Science facilities, it is clear that securing funding in areas such as Sport and Recreation is more difficult. Some of our facilities are now outdated and in need of significant investment. We hope that fundraising for the Centenary Year will not only allow us to improve our facilities and increase resources for our current pupils, but also to provide a legacy for future pupils who join the School.

Thank you for your continued support to your School and I offer you my very best wishes for the summer period.

ALUMNI PROFILE: SAM ROBINSON

Both an Old Westcliffian and an Old Brentwood, solicitor Sam Robinson obtained his LLB Law degree from the University of Reading prior to completing his LPC at Guildford College of Law in 1996. Upon qualification, Sam returned to Essex joining the firm established by his Father, Paul Robinson Solicitors, based in Southend-on-Sea. Sam has practised property law for over 20 years, acting for thousands of individuals, high net worth clients and leading companies. Promotion to Partner came in 2001 and his appointment to the position of Managing Partner followed in 2010. The firm has seen significant growth with additional offices now in Benfleet, Billericay and Stratford, East London.

Sam lives in Leigh-on-Sea with his wife Sarah and their three daughters. His main interests are sport and the theatre, actively supporting all those organisations, clubs and teams with whom his firm has links.

About Paul Robinson Solicitors

Paul Robinson Solicitors are actively involved with the community. Being

one of the largest independent law firms in the South East, they demonstrate their support in a variety of ways. Pro Bono advice is provided regularly at local Law Centres who work to defend the rights of less advantaged people in the community: to safeguard their homes, stay in work, and protect their families. Free legal advice is also given at various Citizens Advice Bureaux, particularly those in Billericay and Southend, to assist with a wide range of legal issues including small claims, neighbour disputes, housing and rights at work.

The firm has also enjoyed a long association with a wide variety of organisations. Within the sporting sector, these include West Ham United and Southend United Football Clubs, Southend Rugby Football Club, Southend & EMT Cricket Club, and Billericay Town Cricket Club. Sponsorship of the arts includes the Cliffs Pavilion and Palace Theatre in Westcliff-on-Sea in various ways, one of which is sponsoring a Summer School for local children and local art group TOMA, based in Chalkwell Hall, displaying their artwork in the firm's New Bank office space in Westcliff-



on-Sea. Educational partnerships include the University of Reading and, most recently, we are delighted that Paul Robinson Solicitors have become Principal Sponsor for Westcliff High School for Boys' Centenary Year.



WHSB CENTENARY GALA DINNER: 1 FEBRUARY 2020

In 2020 we shall be celebrating 100 Years since Westcliff High School for Boys first opened on Victoria Avenue in Southend-on-Sea. The Official Launch of our Centenary celebrations will take place on Saturday 1 February 2020 and we are delighted to extend the invitation to you to join us for our Gala Dinner to be held at the Cliffs Pavilion. This special occasion will provide many of our pupils in Music and Drama with a rare opportunity to perform in a large, professional performance space, which will be enjoyed by members of our immediate and wider community, as well as

supporters and sponsors.

This special black-tie event will commence with a Drinks Reception at 6.15pm, followed by Dinner at 7.00pm. Live entertainment, featuring current pupils and alumni of the School will take place throughout the evening. A photographer will be on hand to capture our celebrations, and drinks will be available to purchase throughout the evening. After Dinner we shall hold a raffle of luxury prizes and the evening will close with a disco. Carriages at 12.00am.

Tickets are available at a price of £85 per person, or a table of ten people may be booked for £750. Tickets may be obtained at <https://whsb.ticketsource.co.uk/> or by contacting our Community Development Office using the contact details at the end of this newsletter. The event is open to everyone who has a past or present connection with the School and to



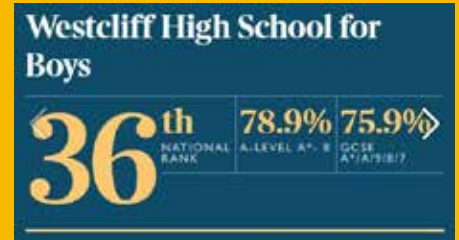
Westcliff High School for Boys

friends in the wider community. Please book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Our guests will receive a commemorative 2020 programme and free entry to all of our Centenary events taking place throughout the year. Any surplus from this celebration will go towards the School's Centenary Appeal, which has been established to raise funds for improved sporting and recreational facilities for our pupils. We look forward to seeing you on this special evening.



SUCCESS IN SUNDAY TIMES 2019 GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

We were delighted to be ranked 36th in the country and fifth in East Anglia in the list of State Schools in 2019's Sunday Times Parent Power survey of the best UK schools, which provides rankings based on the latest academic results. Southend High School for Boys, Southend High School for Girls and Westcliff High School for Girls took the sixth, seventh and eighth positions behind us in the East Anglia Region. This is testament to the hard work of pupils, staff and parents. Well done to all! The full results are available on The Times website.



A LEVEL CERTIFICATE COLLECTION FOR 2018 LEAVERS

We were delighted to welcome back to School in December over 80 members of our Alumni Community who left the School after completing their A Level examinations last summer. Staff and ex-students mingled over drinks and nibbles, taking the opportunity to catch up with School news and speak to their friends, many of whom

they had not seen since leaving the School. The event also afforded the opportunity for individuals to collect their examination certificates.

For those members of our Alumni Community who are yet to collect their A Level examination certificates, these may be collected from the School

Reception during Term Time by prior arrangement with Mrs Economou (Examinations Officer) who can be contacted by emailing economoua@whsb.essex.sch.uk.

ALUMNI VISITS TO THE SCHOOL: DAVID WILMOTT

We were delighted to welcome Old Westcliffian David Willmott (1945 to 1952) back to the School last December when he visited with his wife Lorraine to donate a copy of his autobiography *From Essex to Everywhere* to the School Library. His autobiography details his life as an airline pilot flying all over the world and promises to be a fascinating read.

After completing National Service in the RAF, David became a commercial

airline pilot. The photograph below left shows him in full flying gear, taken in late 1952 shortly after starting his National Service, learning to fly a Tiger Moth and wearing his Westcliff High School for Boys scarf! The picture below was taken in Jordan, when he was flying for the "Lawrence of Arabia" film unit in 1960/61. Over a period of some 56 years, from his first take-off in 1952 to his last touch-down in 2008, David logged some 26,000 hours of flying time in 50

different types of aircraft. He spent a further 2,000 hours training other pilots on simulators and worked for 30 employers in various parts of the world. David now lives in Somerset with his wife Lorraine.



CORRECTION

We are very grateful to Mr Tate (Old Westcliffian 1945 to 1950) for his good humour and understanding regarding the mistake made in our reporting in the last edition of the Alumni Network Newsletter. We had thanked the family of the late Mr Leonard Tate for kindly donating some items of memorabilia to the School's archive collection. We are delighted to say that Mr Tate has since contacted us to confirm that he is alive and well. We sincerely apologise to Mr Tate for the error.

ALUMNI ENQUIRIES: WALTER THOMAS FORD

The Community Development Office have been contacted by Mrs Sue Holland, whose late Father, Kenneth Robert Russell Hendry, attended the School between 1926 and 1930.

Kenneth Hendry worked in international trade after leaving School and then joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) during World War 2 and saw service on fleet minesweepers with the Arctic Convoys. On leaving the Navy he worked for EK Cole until his retirement.

Mrs Holland is looking for information about her Father's best friend from his school days, Walter Thomas Ford. Walter Ford died in action in 1941 whilst serving with the Essex Yeomanry in WW2 at Tobruk. He is remembered on the War Memorial plaque in St Alban's Church in Westcliff-on-Sea, having lived locally and sung in the choir there. No attendance records dating back to the

1920/30s are held in School for Walter Ford which would suggest that he did not attend Westcliff High School for Boys. It is thought that Walter had an older brother, Hector, and that his parents eventually relocated to Cirencester. The photographs are of Walter Ford in Essex Yeomanry Uniform and combat uniform, taken in the Western Desert circa 1940. If any members of our Alumni Community have any knowledge of Walter Ford, please get in touch with the CDO.



DRAMA GROWS FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Drama continues to grow from strength to strength at WHSB. With a multitude of plays and musical productions and a summer trip to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, it features as a major part of the extra-curricular life of the School. Students from across the School are given the opportunity to develop their presentational and performance skills under the encouraging guidance of Director of Drama, Ben Jeffreys.

Ben, also Head of History at the School, joined the staff in 2016, bringing with him a wealth of experience having taught previously at other prestigious UK Grammar and Independent schools. Since joining WHSB, Ben

has overseen productions of *Oliver!*, *Dr Faustus* and Berthold Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. Last Summer saw the School take part for the first time in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, performing the critically-acclaimed *Waiting for OFSTED*, written by Ben himself.

This year has seen productions of *Hamlet*, *Guys & Dolls* and *Lord of the Flies*, and there are exciting plans for next year. We will keep you updated with forthcoming productions via this newsletter and WHSB's Social Media channels, as well as through the *Westcliff Diary* which can be viewed on our website at <https://www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/>.



CENTENARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPONSORSHIP

We are exceptionally grateful to Paul Robinson Solicitors for becoming Principal Sponsor of our Centenary Year. Other sponsors for our Centenary Gala Dinner include Rickard Luckin, Cadman, Mr I Francis, and Mr J Gershinson. We are most grateful to all the individuals and organisations

who offer sponsorship and financial support to support the Education and Extra-Curricular provision for current pupils. Should you or your organisation be interested in offering sponsorship or financial support, whether this is for the Centenary Year or other provision, please contact Mr

D Partridge, Director of Resources, or Mrs C Robinson, the Headmaster's Personal Assistant.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Summer Sinfonia Concert Thursday 4 July 2019 - 7.30pm

This term's orchestral concert starts with a bang: Rossini's Overture to The Barber of Seville is known around the world, due in no small part to Bugs Bunny and friends commandeering its cheeky melodies for various Looney Tunes cartoons. This will be followed by Alex Usher's final performance as a soloist whilst a student at WHSB and is not to be missed. The concert's second half will feature more extravagant programmatic music, beginning with Smetana's Vltava. Rimsky-Korsakov's lively Capriccio Espagnol will close the concert. Tickets are free of charge for pupils and cost £5.00 for adults.



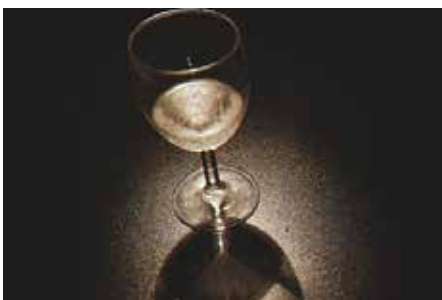
Summer Band & BBQ Friday 12 July 2019 - 7.00pm

An annual treat, this year's Summer Band and BBQ promises to be even more exciting than the last. Guests will be invited to sit outdoors to listen to bands and ensembles such as the Westcliff Choir and Sax Quartet performing popular and Jazz classics, ranging from Toto's Africa to Gerswhin's Summertime, with burgers and sausages flipping on the grill all the while. Tickets are available on TicketSource at the cost of £14 for adults with food, £10 for pupils with food, £7 for adults without food and £4 for pupils without food.



OWA Annual Reunion Dinner 2019 Friday 6 September 2019 - 6.15pm

Old Westcliffian's are invited to join the OWA for their annual reunion dinner. Taking place in the School Hall, we look forward to a splendid evening of fine food, good company, and reminiscing. The reception begins at 6.15pm for a 7.00pm dinner. Over 100 people spanning eight decades attended last year's dinner and we are looking forward to building on that success.



Westcliff High School for Boys' Centenary Ball Saturday 1 February 2020 - 6.15pm

In 2020 we shall be celebrating 100 years since Westcliff High School for Boys first opened on Victoria Avenue in Southend-on-Sea and we are delighted to extend this invitation to you to join us for the Official Launch of our 2020 celebrations at *The Cliffs Pavilion*. This special black-tie evening will commence with a drinks reception at 6.15pm, followed by a dinner at 7.00pm. Live entertainment, featuring current pupils and alumni of the School, will follow along with a raffle of luxury prizes and the evening closes with a disco. Tickets are priced at £85 per person.

Tickets for all *Westcliff Diary* events can be purchased via TicketSource at <http://whsb.ticketsource.co.uk/>

LAST WORD

If you or someone you know would like to join the WHSB Alumni Network and/or join the OWA, please take a few minutes to register your details via the WHSB School website. Select 'Community' from the Main Menu followed by 'Alumni & Old Westcliffian Association'. You will then receive password information enabling access to the secure 'Alumni' area of the School website. For further information, contact Mrs Clarke or Mrs Weller in the Community Development Office. The WHSB Alumni Network is completely free to join and we very much look forward to hearing from you.

In addition, you can follow WHSB on Facebook and Twitter where you can find out about the latest developments and events taking place at the School. We would be delighted to welcome members of our Alumni Community back to the School to see what is going on.

We welcome your comments and contributions for future editions of the Alumni Network Newsletter which will be published termly, with the next scheduled for Autumn 2019. Please contact Mrs Clarke or Mrs Weller in the CDO. We look forward to hearing from you.



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