



OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

Old Westcliffian Newsletter

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ISSUE 1 / WINTER 2024

Fundraising for Westcliff High School for Boys: Max (Old Westcliffian) and Anthony (Co-Chair of Governors) reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro



FIDE ET FORTITUDINE

WELCOME FROM OUR SECRETARY

Welcome to the OWA Newsletter. This will be the first Newsletter produced by the School, and we hope that it captures the best of the old style and embraces the changes we consider are needed to grow the Association, ensure it has resonance with younger generations of OWs and allows the strength of our alumnus to benefit the School, each other and current pupils. Please let me or the School know your thoughts, and constructive criticism is very welcome. This is your Association, your Newsletter and we wish to ensure broad support.

Our Annual Dinner was held on 13 September. It was a wonderful evening, including live background music from some of the School's very talented musicians, and updates from the Headmaster and School Captain. Regrettably, the number of attendees was lower than hoped and your Steering Group is reviewing.

A question often asked of the Headmaster, Mike Skelly when he meets up with OWs is whether WHSB remains a 'local school'. The simple answer to that is yes, very much so. Entry to School is at Year 7; the School remains selective and therefore applicants need to sit the 11+ examination and meet a minimum score. Year 7 has six forms and 191 pupils, which is the largest in the School's history; 80% of these places are reserved for those living in the SS0 – SS9 postcodes. Very pleasingly – and this is a vast improvement on the past – the number of boys within the priority catchment area meeting the pass mark and wishing to attend WHSB has been close to or above the number of available places. The remaining 20% of places are available to any boy outside of the priority catchment area and selection is by the highest 11+ score.

One of the new features in the Newsletter is a 'Where Are They Now' column. I thought it would be fascinating to seek your assistance to understand more about our Alumnus, particularly those who have reached national and / or international stature in the fields of sport and culture. Kicking this quest off is Nothing But Thieves, an alternative / indie group which was formed by musicians who met at WHSB in the late 2000s. The band is now an international success, playing to sell-out audiences all over the world. In July 2024 the band was special guest to Green Day at Wembley Stadium, playing before an audience of just under 100,000. The question is, have any other OWs played before a larger audience? Please let me know.

*Jon Gershinson
Secretary OWA*

secretary@oldwestcliffianorganisation.org



Nothing But Thieves

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

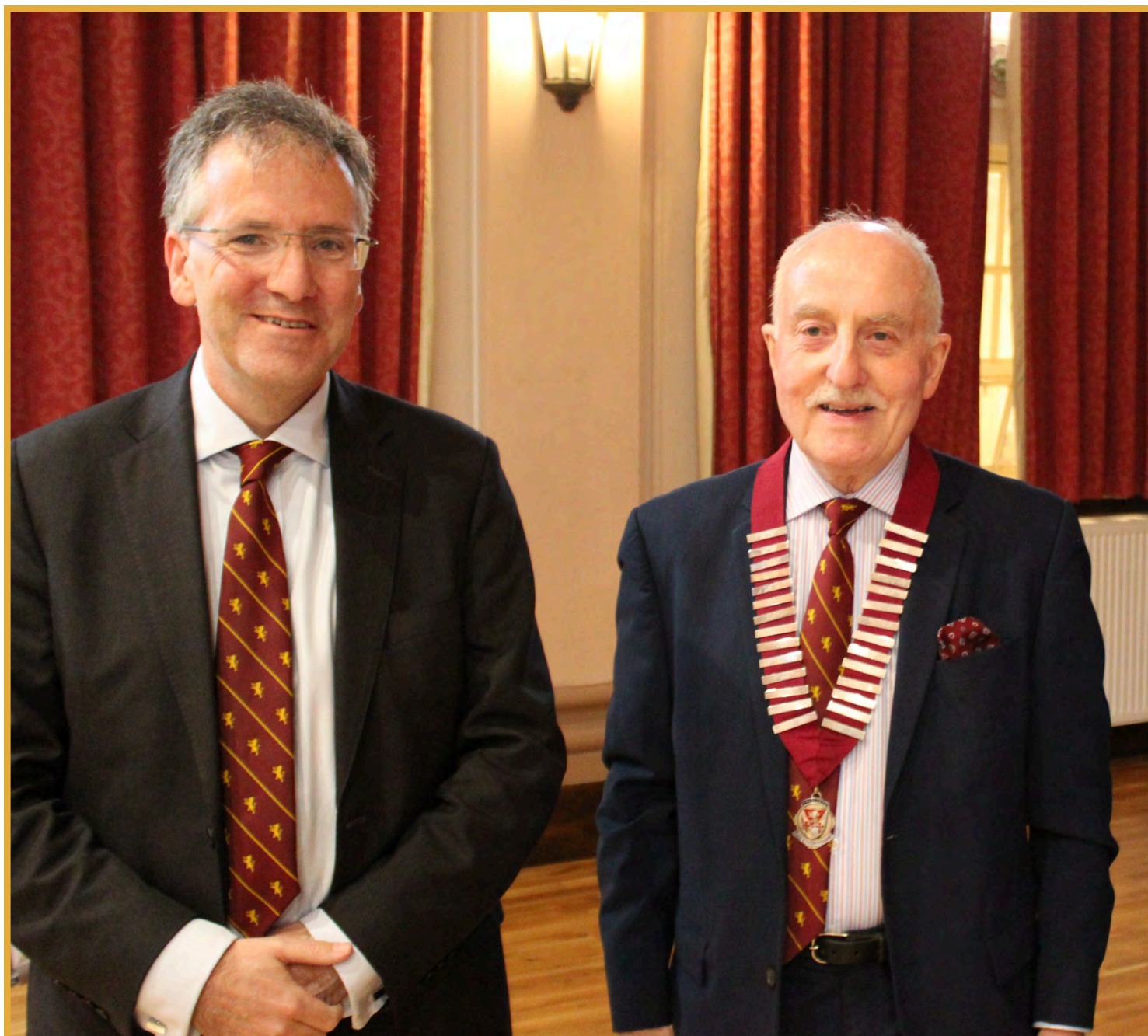
Fellow Old Westcliffians, it continues to be an enormous privilege to serve as your President. When I look at the names of my illustrious predecessors, some of whom I knew at school, it is very humbling. Our members span the decades, and what unites us is the affection in which we hold our old Alma Mater and the lifelong friendships that we forged in our years at WHSB.

Our Annual Dinner always was the highlight of the year, and this year's, whilst very enjoyable, was disappointing with under 60 attendees. Your committee would, very much, welcome your feedback as to what we could do better, or even differently. Our Centenary will soon be upon us. We are, at present, discussing how best to celebrate this milestone, and again, your thoughts would be most welcome.

This year will be the 79th Anniversary of the Second World War. All Westcliffians will recall the Memorial Plaque in the west corridor bearing the names of those from our school who lost their lives in the conflict. This November, I laid a wreath, on behalf of the OWA at the Southend Memorial. They will never be forgotten.

I wish you all good health and happiness for the coming year.

Terry Birdseye, JP, President OWA



Mike Skelly, Headmaster and Chairman OWA; Terry Birdseye, President OWA

OUR CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

THE OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION: GROWING AND DEVELOPING OUR ORGANISATION AND NETWORK OF FORMER PUPILS



Welcome to this first edition of our new style Old Westcliffian Newsletter.

Creating a new publication is always challenging and I hope you are pleased with our first attempt at updating the format and content. As we continue to produce future editions, we intend to adapt and develop the content as we receive feedback and ideas from Old Westcliffians, and therefore we shall very much welcome your thoughts and feedback on this and future copy.

Many of you will access a copy of our termly Westcliff Diary, and therefore some of the copy may be familiar to you. As a starting point, we felt it was important to extract from The Westcliff Diary any content we believed to be directly relevant, or of particular interest to Old Westcliffians, as not all will have viewed our latest edition. Equally, we have included additional content and, as we develop the Old Westcliffian Newsletter, we hope to include more and varied articles, which we can also share with our current pupils. Old Westcliffians provide such inspiration for our current pupils and, just as we share The Westcliff Diary with Old Westcliffians, so too we plan to share our Old Westcliffian Newsletter with our pupils. In doing so, I hope we shall be able to further strengthen our networks in the years ahead.

Looking ahead to future editions, we need your support to ensure the articles remain lively and varied, as well as helpful in promoting contacts between Old Westcliffians from across the generations. You will understand that the content can only be as effective as we all work together to make it, so we would be delighted to receive your articles for inclusion in future editions. We would like to hear from as many Old Westcliffians as would like to contribute, and you are welcome to share items on your education, career or life following your years at WHSB, an interest you think will have wider appeal, reflections or memories of your School days, photographs, an obituary in connection with an Old Westcliffian recently departed, or an appeal for details of any Old Westcliffian with whom you may have lost contact over the years.

We were pleased to welcome the many Old Westcliffians who attended our Annual Dinner in September to share time with friends and to show their support for the School. As our President, Mr Terry Birdseye, has noted in his welcome message we had hoped to see Old Westcliffians returning for that event in larger numbers. We understand the many competing demands on time, but please do consider joining us for future, similar events, and encourage others to do the same, as we shall be delighted see our numbers grow.

The exercise of consulting members of the OWA, and Old Westcliffians more widely, on the role and structure of an Alumni organisation was most interesting, and it has served to prompt us all to reflect on why we wish to promote, develop, and increase networks across generations of Old Westcliffians. In simple terms, of course, the benefits are twofold. Firstly, the lives of so many Old Westcliffians are enriched through the friendships they maintain with other former pupils once they leave the School. So strong were the friendships formed at School, that those relationships endure and so many Old Westcliffians have stayed in touch and continued to meet up whenever possible, perhaps over 10, 20, 50, or even 70 or more years. Equally, life in the 10 or 20 years following one's school years can be particularly demanding, busy and distracting, meaning that friendships formed at school have drifted and contact has been lost. A strong network of Alumni can also support in reuniting former pupils and, with relevant permissions of course, the School is happy to facilitate that process where contact information has been shared. A further benefit of a strong network is the sharing of experience and support between Old Westcliffians, whether that be in connection with paths through university, careers, or through the other challenges of life.

Secondly, such an organisation exists to bring members together to support their School. We know that many Old Westcliffians place great value on their experiences at WHSB, the start in life their School years gave them through friends, staff, Alumni, and opportunities taken, and they wish to ensure that similar opportunities endure for the benefit of our current pupils. In this regard, we are fortunate to benefit from a great deal of support from Old Westcliffians, for example through careers advice, placement opportunities, awards, lectures, and donations. As School funding declines, increasingly we need financial support from Old Westcliffians who can offer help to the School in maintaining educational and extra-curricular provision. With this in mind, I have taken the opportunity to include in this edition information on how you can support with our fundraising efforts to ensure our pupils' access to provision remains strong and varied.

In bringing the Old Westcliffian Association under the School's umbrella, we hope to draw on School resources to help strengthen Alumni networks, and we have appointed a part-time Community Development Officer, Mrs Jemima Clarke, who will support with the production of this Newsletter, and liaise with Old Westcliffians concerning their articles, forthcoming events, and so on. Mrs Clarke can be contacted via email: community@whsb.essex.sch.uk. Yet, the growth, development and strength of the Old Westcliffian Association will rely heavily on the extent of active and regular engagement from its members, and in that we seek your continued support.

The School holds a database of Old Westcliffians and their contact details and we need your support in ensuring this continues to grow, as it is through those contacts that we can help develop the organisation. Please continue to check with your Old Westcliffian contacts that they have registered their details on our database, and encourage them to also contact others in this regard. Please also continue to offer your support to the School in any way you can, and we shall be delighted to see you at some or all of our programmed public events throughout the year; I know that means a great deal to our pupils and staff.

Should you wish to visit the School, or to discuss ways in which you can offer your support, please contact Mrs Holley, my Personal Assistant, who will assist with an appointment. Thank you for your continued support for your School.

I would like to record my thanks to Mrs Clarke for her support in preparing material for this edition, and to Mr Hadley for his superb work on the design and layout of the Newsletter.

Mike Skelly, Headmaster and Chairman OWA



**THE LAYING OF THE SCHOOL'S FOUNDATION STONE:
100 YEARS ANNIVERSARY**

This September marks 100 years since construction began on the site of Westcliff High School for Boys as we know it today. The School was established in 1920 as the co-educational Commercial School, with original premises known as "Belsfield" (a large house with outbuildings) located in Victoria Avenue, Southend. These were quickly outgrown, with buildings designed for 200 pupils in 1920 housing nearly twice that number in 1922, as the demand for secondary education in the town increased with its growing population. Indeed, Southend saw unprecedented growth between 1880 and 1920, close to London as a new commuter town.

Dr Alan White, in his book *Westcliff High School for Boys, A Centenary History*, explains that it had never been Southend Borough Council's intention for the cramped Belsfield site to be the Commercial School's permanent home. Between 1920 and 1922, plans were afoot to relocate the Commercial School to farmland adjacent to what was then known as Eastwood Lane, WHSB's current site. This land had been purchased in 1914 by the Council, originally with the aim of developing it into a public park. The location of this new site was deemed appropriate for an additional secondary school in the borough, with the most need being for children living to the west of the town. Indeed, the majority of the Commercial School's pupils in the early 1920s lived in Leigh and Westcliff. Also at that time, Southend High School for Boys and Southend High School for Girls were located in Central Southend, either in or around Victoria Avenue. As the planned move gained pace, in August 1922 the Commercial School's name was changed to Westcliff High School for Boys and Girls, in readiness for its new location.

Beset with limited resources and ever tightening central government funding, the original plans for a large new building that was able to accommodate both the boys and the girls had to be scaled back. The final go ahead was given for a slightly smaller design which only the boys would move to, thus determining the future of the two schools in becoming single-sex as opposed to co-educational from that point on.

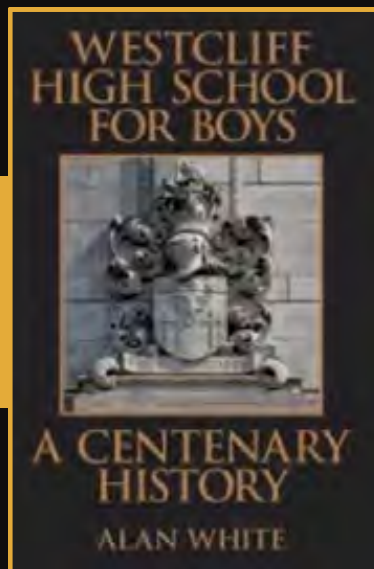
The girls remained at Belsfield for a further 14 years, moving into their separate purpose-built new school next door in 1938.

In his book, Dr White describes the construction of the new Westcliff High School for Boys building as commencing in September 1924, with the Foundation Stone, still visible today to the east of the Main Entrance, being laid on 20 October 1924 by William Miles, the then Mayor of Southend and the Chairman of the Westcliff Governing Board. Bad weather, resulting in the lower field becoming waterlogged, hampered progress and, although remedial work was carried out at the time, this occurrence is not unfamiliar even today! The new School building was officially opened on 19 July 1926.

Westcliff High School for Boys, A Centenary History, by Dr Alan White, is available from the School's online Shop <https://whsforboys.shoptill-e.com>. Not only is it a fascinating read about the School's origins and timeline, but also a vivid commentary on the local and social history relating to the first 100 years of the School.

Mrs J Clarke, Community Development Assistant

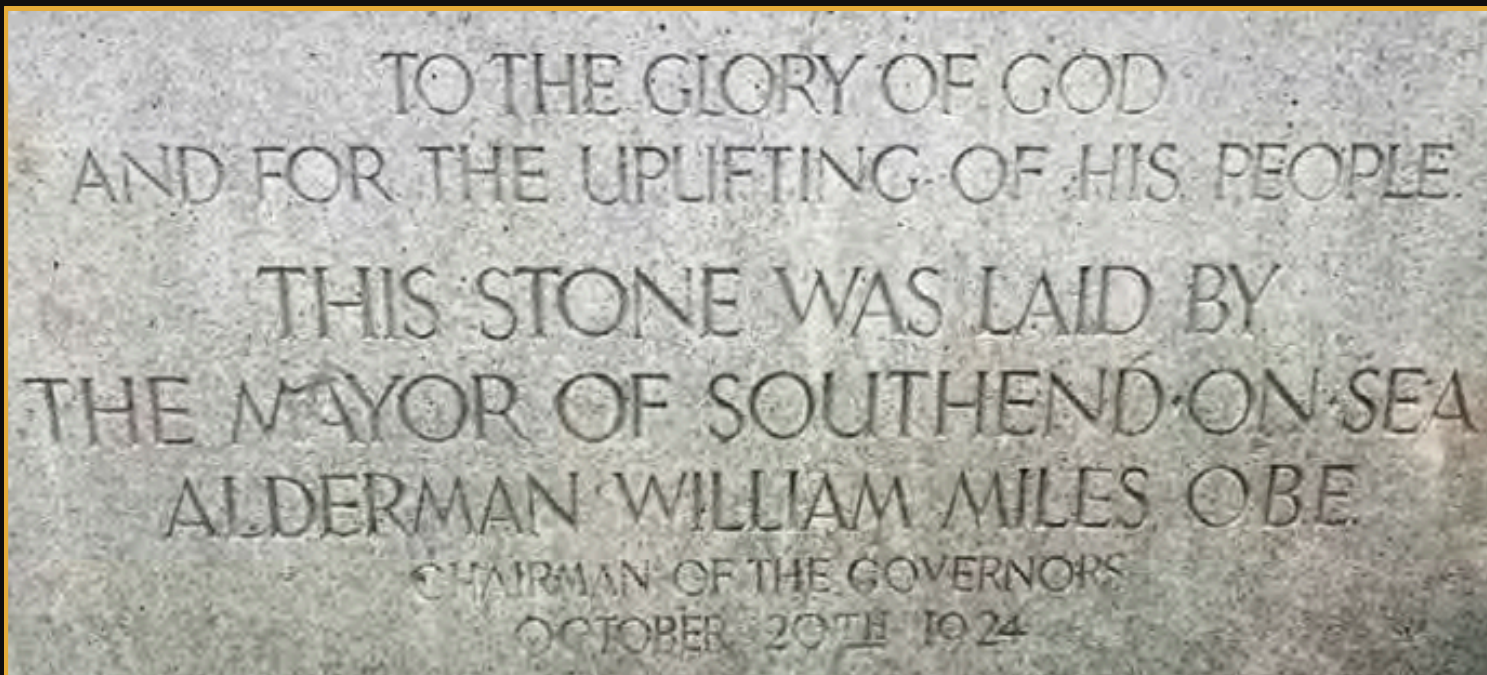
**Westcliff High School for Boys,
A Centenary History,
by Dr Alan White**



The original School site at Belsfield, central Southend, 1920



Digging the Foundations of Westcliff High School for Boys, 1924



Our Foundation Stone at the Main Entrance to the School, laid on 20 October 1924

WHSB ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

GEORGE MULA

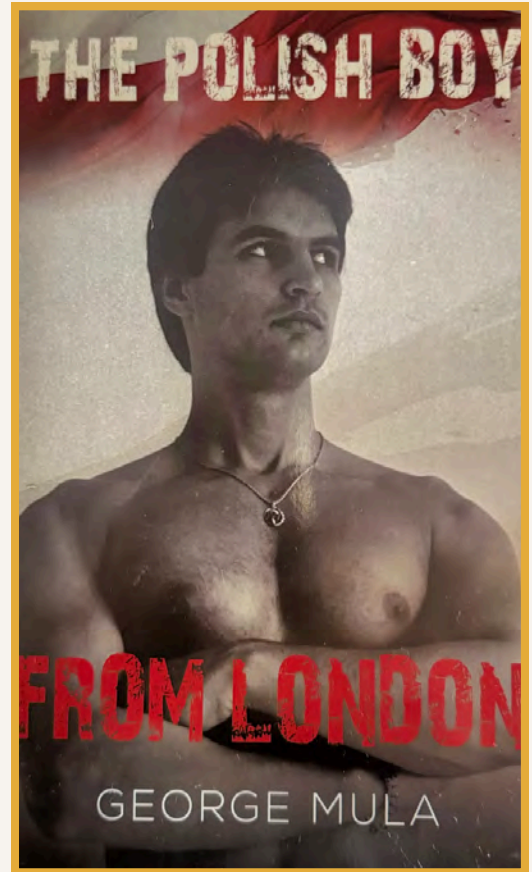
For the last 34 years I have called Poland home. [Zdjęcie Warszawy] I completed the Upper Sixth, leaving the school in 1970, the year of the Golden Jubilee, to which our magnificent Headmaster, Henry Cloke, also delayed his retirement. I was something of an underachiever academically and would urge all pupils not to waste the wonderful opportunity that such an amazing school affords. As a result, leaving with 3 mediocre A-levels, the path I chose was more difficult than it need be and my fondest memories are playing Atahualpa, in the Royal Hunt of the Sun and representing the school in eleven different sporting disciplines spread over my years as a pupil. Yet the ethos at the school stayed with me especially the thirst for knowledge and the ability to think independently, for which I am eternally grateful.

The first half of my career was spent commuting to London working in Financial Services making a decent living, ultimately owning, with a couple of partners, a Corporate Finance and Wealth Management Boutique in the West End of London. Then, in the summer of 1989, Poland conducted the first free elections and I found myself part of the first British Government Mission to Poland, "The City of London Initiative". Twelve of us, all with Polish roots, travelled to Poland to lecture and transfer knowledge about the functioning of a market economy. Most of us stayed and two even became Ministers of Finance, in Poland. After conducting a dozen privatisations I moved into property investment, with over a billion euro of transactions under my belt so far, in my Polish business, Integrated Finance Group.

Along the way, I have been blessed with four sons and two grandsons also been awarded the Polish Silver Cross of Merit (Civil), similar to a British OBE. It was time to do other things and so, eight years ago, I boxed at the National Stadium in Warsaw. At the age of 64, by far the oldest white-collar boxer in the country. [Zdjęcie z Boks] I also translated into English a booklet entitled "Polish Armed Forces in the West 1939-46" sponsored by the Polish Ministry of Defence and the Veterans Association, copies of which are in the school library.

This year I had my first novel published, "The Polish Boy from London" [zdjecie książki] a copy of which is proudly displayed in the Authors Lounge in the Oriental, in Bangkok, rubbing shoulders with the works of such masters as Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, who took command of his first ship as Captain from the hotel. [Zdjęcie Authors Lounge]

None of this would have been possible without the tools and inspiration which WHSB provided.



WHSB ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

SECOND LIEUTENANT DOUGLAS PITCHER, ROYAL ENGINEERS

We are proud to report that former pupil Douglas Pitcher, OW 2013 - 2018, completed his training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst August 2024, being commissioned as a Second Lieutenant joining the British Army Royal Engineers.

During his time at WHSB, Douglas was an outstanding member of the School's Combined Cadet Force, being one of two cadets selected from hundreds across the UK to represent their country on a six-week Canadian Cadet Exchange programme. This 'once in a lifetime' opportunity took place in the summer holidays after his GCSE examinations. It was also the first time ever that cadets from a Cadet Expansion Programme state school had been successfully selected. After leaving WHSB, Douglas joined the Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College, followed by the University of Newcastle where he obtained a degree in engineering.

We congratulate Douglas on his achievement, the impressive example he has set for our current and future cadets and wish him every success.

WHSB ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

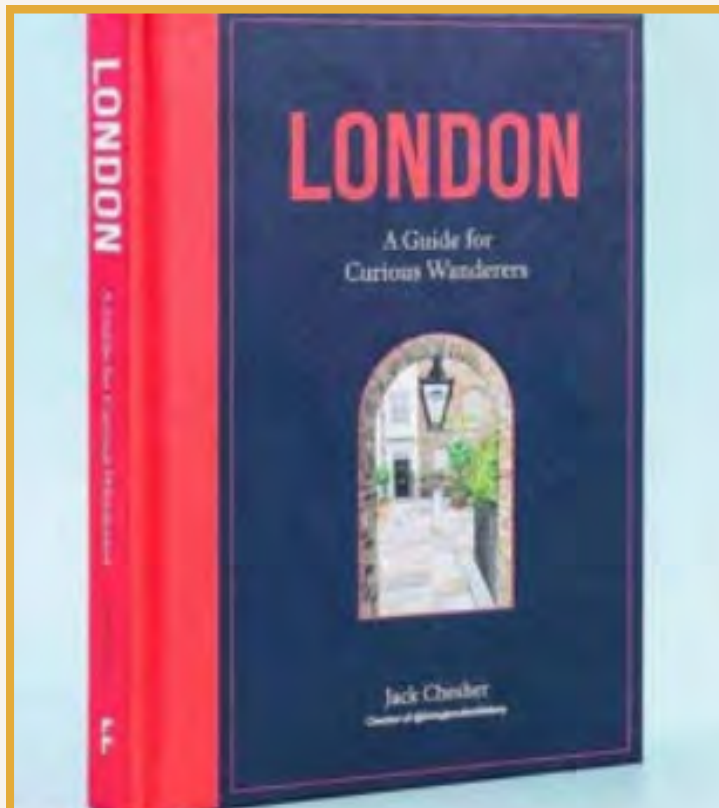
JACK CHESHER

Jack describes himself as “an author, tour guide and blogger”. With a substantial following on social media, he now runs his own successful London tour company “Living London History”. He has also written a best-selling book “London, A Guide for Curious Wanderers” and produces a weekly newsletter for subscribers to his website.

Jack grew up in Leigh-on-Sea, where his family still live, and with London being so close, spent a great deal of time visiting its various museums, inspiring his passion for history. After leaving Westcliff High School for Boys, he studied a BA in History at the University of Bristol, moving to the South West and living there for several years. After completing his degree, and four years into a career within hotel management, Jack launched “Living London History” as a weekly blog post back in August 2020. This was somewhat of a pandemic project, with the hospitality industry seriously impacted by Covid-19 and Jack finding himself not having much else to do other than walk around London. To reflect his interest in the history surrounding people as they go about their everyday lives, he started voraciously exploring the city and its environs, and writing about his findings to a few keen subscribers. Jack said: “I started this blog to share my journey discovering London’s fascinating past, by walking its bustling grand streets, diving down its mysterious alleyways and strolling along the banks of the Thames. I believe that the city itself is the greatest and most interesting museum of all.”

In 2021, Jack took part in Open City’s Golden Key Academy guiding course, and in October 2021 he started running his guided walks of London’s hidden history. He describes his walks as “focusing on one area of London at a time, with the aim to uncover its stories, point out the little details many miss, really get under the city’s skin, and ultimately share my passion for the city’s history.” In June 2022, having built up his subscribers, Jack resigned from his day job and took his tour company “Living London History” full time, saying he has not looked back since. April 2023 saw the publication of his best-selling book “London: A Guide For Curious Wanderers”, Jack describing this as his “guide to London’s quirks, oddities and often overlooked details”. Beautifully illustrated and containing self-guided walking maps to discover the city, this Sunday Times Bestseller is available worldwide and is currently listed by Amazon in the UK as the Number 1 most gifted book in their Local and Urban Cultural History titles. For details of how to subscribe to Jack’s weekly newsletter, or for further information on his guided tours of London, visit his “Living London History” website: <https://livinglondonhistory.com/>. “Living London History” can also be followed on social media.

Mrs J Clarke, Community Development Officer



WHERE ARE THEY NOW? PLEASE GET IN TOUCH

We would be delighted to hear from Old Westcliffians who would like to share with others their own story since their School years. Through this, our new look Old Westcliffian Newsletter, we hope we shall see this section grow as we improve our networks and hear more from our former pupils.

UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI

JACOB MELLOR

A-Levels: Chemistry (A*), Mathematics (A*), Further Mathematics (A*), History (A*)

University: University of Cambridge

Course: Natural Sciences

Starting as a new undergraduate at Cambridge University was certainly daunting, with the level of academic excellence entrenched in its history that I was now to be a part of. However, I soon found myself feeling relaxed in the new city, getting to know so many wonderful peers and meeting the lovely staff; matriculation and the ensuing formal dinner was a wonderful way to meet people. Having a session with my Director of Studies going through a problem sheet was not only helpful to my understanding but showed me that not all feedback from Cambridge professors would be cut-throat!

For those applying to university, my primary advice would be to really consider what subjects you love doing and are passionate about, particularly for Oxford or Cambridge, where you average weekly workload is 40 hours! Enjoying what you are learning will help you have a better university experience. Make sure you are as well-equipped for the application process as you can be; ask your teachers' opinions, thoroughly prepare for any admissions tests, and it will pay dividends. Finally, don't worry if you find settling in hard – everyone will at different times, and welcome any mistakes as a way to learn.



Jacob Mellor on results day 2024



Anita Lebioda

ANITA LEBIODA

A-Level Subjects: English Literature, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Polish (done outside of WHSB)

Currently Studying: English and Hispanic Studies at the University of Nottingham

Being a University Student is not what I expected. Stereotypically, university is the first experience of adulthood. For me, however, it wasn't like this whatsoever - I've always been independent, always been able to cook and budget for myself. University life isn't much different from my life at home, apart from the fact that I can get back home at 3 am with no parents to tell me off!

It is definitely the most work I have had to put into anything. I'm currently balancing my studies with applying to internships, planning my year abroad, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and having a social life. Whilst this is all very hard, it is worth knowing I am doing this to aid my future, but I have also met and expanded my social bubble which I wouldn't change for the world.

My advice to people who are thinking about applying to university is to research your university and course thoroughly - I didn't, I'm just lucky that Nottingham suited me. Additionally, think about what you want from university - it is a lot more work, it can also cause you to be further away from family, which can be detrimental for some. University is very expensive, so if you do it, make sure it's worth it and get the best out of it. Join societies, make friends and make use of ALL the resources you get.

SUPPORTING OTHERS THROUGH THE MEMORY OF OUR WONDERFUL FORMER PUPIL AND FRIEND, CHARLES ROBERTS

Well done to Old Westcliffian Owen Brennan on his current fundraising campaign to raise much needed funds for Mind, the charity providing a wealth of support in relation to the mental health of young people and adults.

In September this year, Owen and his girlfriend, Faith, ran the Nottingham half marathon in memory of our wonderful former pupil and friend, Charles Roberts. September this year marks 3 years since we lost this remarkable young man, and our School community was left poorer without him.

Charles' loss highlights the importance of supporting our young people with poor mental health, and the excellent charitable work of Mind in this regard.

If you would like to support Owen and Faith in their fundraising, it is still possible to donate to support this important charity, please visit their JustGiving page here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/forcharles?utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=page%2Fforcharles&utm_source=copyLink&utm_campaign=pfp-share



JustGiving®



JIMMY HARRISON, OLD WESTCLIFFIAN

It was with great sadness that we heard the news of Jimmy Harrison's passing; Jimmy left us on Monday 22 July.

Many Old Westcliffians will have known Jimmy, who was himself educated at Westcliff High School for Boys (1945-1951) before completing military service and attending Loughborough College. He returned to the School as a teacher of Physical Education in 1956, taking over the Physical Education Department in 1971, and served with distinction for 35 years. In recognition of his service the School's Sports Hall bears his name – The Jim Harrison Hall.

We remember Jimmy as that larger-than-life character who inspired and encouraged many generations of Westcliffians. During his tenure, the School enjoyed considerable success in a range of sports, and I know that many Old Westcliffians will have fond memories of Jimmy, not least of the many school trips he ran, be it on tour with a team, skiing down slopes, or cycling through the Netherlands. As a young teacher, I lodged at Jimmy's home, and my own memories are of his infectious enthusiasm, good humour, kindness and passion for sport (particularly rugby).

Every team has its star performers and Jimmy was one of our finest. His positive influence lives on through all those he taught at WHSB and we are immensely grateful for his tremendous service. Jimmy's funeral will take place on Friday 30 August and the School's flags flew at half-mast on that day as mark of our respect.

Headmaster

SUPPORTING WHSB'S CAREERS PROGRAMME

We are grateful to so many Old Westcliffians for giving their time, energy and support towards ensuring pupils at WHSB can access the very best provision in relation to the School's Careers Programme. At the time of writing, we are anticipating an informative and successful Careers Evening for those pupils interested in exploring career opportunities in Finance.

Among those experienced professionals who will join the panel for the evening are Old Westcliffians Ed White and Toju Adeneye, and we thank them for supporting this important occasion.

In this limited space we are able to acknowledge only some of those Old Westcliffians who lend their support to enhance the educational and extra-curricular provision we offer at WHSB, but we are grateful to all those who take the opportunity to give something back to their School community. Thank you.



Careers in Finance, 27 November 2024

SIXTH FORM LECTURE SERIES 2025

During the Spring Term 2024, nine Old Westcliffians graciously returned to the School to speak to Sixth Form students about their careers and areas of personal and academic interest. Their fascinating talks covered a diverse range of topics, including chemistry, artificial intelligence, climate finance, and arts and culture, the latter for which we welcomed back Old Westcliffian Professor Alan Read from King's College London. Additionally, a careers panel of professionals, led by OW Alastair Graham, visited the School to share their experiences of the Sixth Form, university, and working in fields such as finance, transport operations, and the civil service. We are always delighted to receive visits from Old Westcliffians and if you would like to contribute to the Spring 2025 programme, please contact [Jemima Clarke community@whsb.essex.sch.uk](mailto:Jemima.Clarke@whsb.essex.sch.uk).



Old Westcliffian Alan Read, Professor of Theatre and Director, Performance Foundation, King's College London

OLD WESTCLIFFIANS APPROACHING 70 REUNITE IN LONDON

This September saw Old Westcliffians from the Class of '73 reunite in London to mark both their milestone 70th birthdays and 50 years since leaving the School. Jeremy Kenward and Paul Javin, who organised the meet, set up a Facebook page entitled "Westcliffians Approaching 70" with the following message:

"If you joined Westcliff High School for Boys as England won the World Cup, if you spent your formative years in the Smack or the Carlton, if you played Rugby with Jimmy Harrison, if Roots Hall was the home of football in the days of Billy Best, if you went to see Mott the Hoople at the Kursaal only to discover the lesser known support band were a group called Queen with Freddie Mercury, if your disco nights were spent at TOTS or the Zero 6, if you experienced DMH's magical mystery tours or tore up Hastings after your A Levels... Before we hit 70 and to mark 50 years since the Class of 73 left WHSB, this September 2024 reunion might be for you!"

Over twenty Old Boys and their partners responded to the call and met up for their celebration and trip down memory lane, coming from as far away as Leeds and Hereford. Those who attended were: Jeremy Kenward, Jonathan Stockdale, Paul Javin, Gregory Reynolds, Jonathan Berack, David Poulten, Laurie Page, Robin Sperring, Ronald Carter, Brian (Eddie) Maczka, Philip Lister, Gerard Rayment, David Cuthell, Peter Gillies, Steven Tuff, Mark Smullian and Geoff Box. An excellent evening was enjoyed by all.



TEACHING AT WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

We are both delighted and proud to currently boast 15 Old Westcliffians who have chosen to return to the classroom at WHSB to serve as members of our superb teaching staff. Schools continue to face difficult challenges in relation to recruitment of teachers, and we are fortunate indeed to continue to attract high quality teachers across all our subject departments, including former pupils who join them in contributing so much to our provision.



Those staff pictured are all Old Westcliffians who now teach at WHSB, or hold roles as members of our support staff

SCHOOL-LED TEACHING INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Following a successful recruitment campaign, last academic year we were delighted to welcome back four Old Westcliffians to WHSB to complete the School-led Teaching Internship Programme, part of a Department for Education initiative. Targeted at undergraduates studying for a degree in STEM-related subjects or languages, the aim of the Internship Programme is to give those participating a taste of teaching before considering it as a career.

Our interns last year; Jathniel, Sachin, William and Ethan are studying for degrees in Mathematics, Chemistry, Computing, and Modern Foreign Languages. During the three-week programme, they shadowed experienced teachers, observed lessons, and gained experience of what school life is like for a teacher outside the classroom. We thank them for participating in the programme and wish them well for the future.

We are grateful to Miss Lo and Mrs Williams for facilitating the programme, and to Miss Negus, Mr Chanut, Mr Lo and Mr Steel for mentoring the interns.

I am always delighted to hear from Old Westcliffians who may wish to discuss the benefits of a career in teaching, and there may be ways in which WHSB can support them in this regard.

If you have thought about teaching as a career and would like to visit the School to meet with me please contact Mrs Holley, my Personal Assistant and she will arrange a visit in my diary.
office@whsb.essex.sch.uk

Headmaster



RAISING FUNDS FOR WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS; CLIMBING MOUNT KILIMANJARO

If you were following our School News earlier this term, either through The Westcliff Diary, or via the School's News Page, you will know that in this year's English Schools Athletics Association (ESAA) National Final in Stoke-on-Trent our Junior and Intermediate Boys Teams gave spectacular performances. Our Intermediate Boys Team gained a podium place, coming an impressive Third in the country, and no less impressive were the performances of our Junior Boys Team, who exceeded their own target for the day, placing them fourth nationally.

Our athletes continue to train hard in order to maintain their position among some of the best Junior and Intermediate athletes in England. However, the School's athletics facilities and equipment are now failing badly and the condition of the tartan is so poor that it must now be replaced if we are to provide the facilities we need.

To be clear, our tartan facility is not merely something which is 'nice to have' for our top athletes; this effectively serves as an outdoor classroom for all our pupils. Aside from providing a surface for long-jump and other athletics training, for example hurdles training, this is a surface on which skills are taught to all pupils when engaging in physical education lessons, and it is important for their general fitness, wellbeing and confidence.

The price quoted for replacement of the tartan facility and associated equipment is an eye-watering £50,000. You are likely to be aware that funding for schools has been in serious decline for over 10 years, with many schools now in a budget deficit position. We continue to manage our budgets carefully, but without your help shall not be able to replace the tartan and other facilities, as there are so many competing pressures on our budget.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to Old Westcliffian Max Cole, and his father Anthony, Co-Chair of Governors at WHSB, who took on the ambitious challenge of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Northeastern Tanzania in September this year and, in doing so, aimed to raise much needed funding for a new tartan facility. We are delighted with their efforts on behalf of the School; this was a most difficult challenge and, in true Westcliffian spirit, through their commitment and perseverance they reached the summit.

We still have a long way to go in order to raise the necessary funds for the new tartan facility, and would be most grateful for the support of Old Westcliffians through donations and sponsorship. If you are able to assist, please visit our fundraising page by scanning the QR code on the photo below or by using the following link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/whsb-athletics-track-appeal>

Returning to the impressive adventures of Max and Anthony, in ascending the tallest mountain in Africa, and the highest free-standing mountain in the world, they trekked through unique and varied flora and fauna, lush rainforests and high-alpine deserts; they crossed vast ice fields and glorious glaciers, to reach their destination. This immense mountain is made up of three volcanoes: Shira, Mawenzi, and their goal, Kibo, the tallest one in the middle. Our climbers faced a demanding schedule over seven days, and they were accompanied by local guides who, they report, were superb.

On behalf of the Old Westcliffians Association I would like to also offer our thanks to Anthony and Max for their efforts towards ensuring current pupils at WHSB continue to benefit from access to the resources necessary for their education and development. I hope other Old Westcliffians will not mind my asking for them to please reflect on the many benefits you enjoyed at WHSB while attending, and the opportunities you have accessed since, as a result of those experiences, and to also lend your support through generous donations. Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is not a requirement! This important resource is required as a matter of urgency as we would like to begin work on its replacement early in 2025.

Should you wish to discuss a donation to the School to assist with the funding challenges we now face, please do get in touch with me directly, as I would be pleased to meet with you. I am also pleased to include in the remainder of this newsletter some further details prepared by Mr Rotheron, Director of Finance and Accounting, on further opportunities for you to support our current pupils.

On behalf of the entire School community, I thank both Max and Anthony for their generosity in supporting the School through their adventure. I would also like to thank you for your support.

Headmaster



Max and Anthony atop the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro

A collection of pictures from their journey to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro



SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

As the content of each edition of the Westcliff Diary clearly demonstrates, WHSB pupils participate in a wide range of deeply enriching activities, both curricular and extra-curricular. The School considers these activities core to its mission of developing both intellect and character in each of our young people. This mission is represented by our Learner Profile, which underpins everything the School delivers. It is important that we all understand that financing such activities, in particular extra-curricular provision, presents an increasing challenge to State Schools, and WHSB is no different; our budget is under significant pressure and, inevitably, it will be in the areas of extra-curricular activity that the pressure is most felt. The School is therefore seeking alternative sources of income to relieve the impact of already stretched budgets. The following are ways in which our parents, alumni, friends of the School, and local companies may be able to assist. Thank you for any support you are able to offer.

DONATING TO THE PUPIL FUND

The School should like to thank all those parents, Old Westcliffians and others who have previously donated, or continue to donate, to the School's Pupil Fund. As well as funding equipment for classrooms and laboratories, together with books for the Library, the Pupil Fund has supported activities and pursuits including Engineering, Computing, Sport, Music, Drama, and the School's Combined Cadet Force. Donating to the Pupil Fund is a straightforward way of making a regular, general (or one-off) contribution towards these enriching activities. Further information can be found at: www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/useful-information-for-all-parents/pupil-fund
Donations should preferably be made by setting up a standing order via your online banking, using the account details below:

Lloyds Bank Sort code: 30-97-84
Account number: 34480360
Account name: Westcliff High School for Boys

Alternatively, you can download a standing order form which can then be completed and submitted to your bank: www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/finance Any questions regarding these arrangements may be sent to the School Bursar at darbyn@whsb.essex.sch.uk

The School is also able to accept donations directly by cash, cheque, or bank transfer, preferably accompanied by a Gift Aid form (if applicable). Gift Aid enables the School to benefit by a further 25% of voluntary donations given, so do please remember to complete the Gift Aid Declaration form if you are an eligible UK taxpayer www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/finance



TARGETED APPEALS

Opportunities to contribute to targeted appeals allow Old Westcliffians and others to donate a sum for a specific activity or project. Current opportunities include the targeted appeal for Athletics facilities and equipment as outlined by the Headmaster in this edition. Further current targeted appeals include the following:

PLAYGROUND FACILITIES

The School would like to install shelters (for use in rain and sunshine) and increase seating provision around playground areas, improving the break and lunchtime experience of our young people and promoting a positive, social ethos. The School is investigating options and anticipates that a sum of £20,000 to £30,000 will be required. As the Headmaster notes, he is always pleased to discuss plans with potential donors, and to engage with them concerning planned solutions for the particular resources in question.

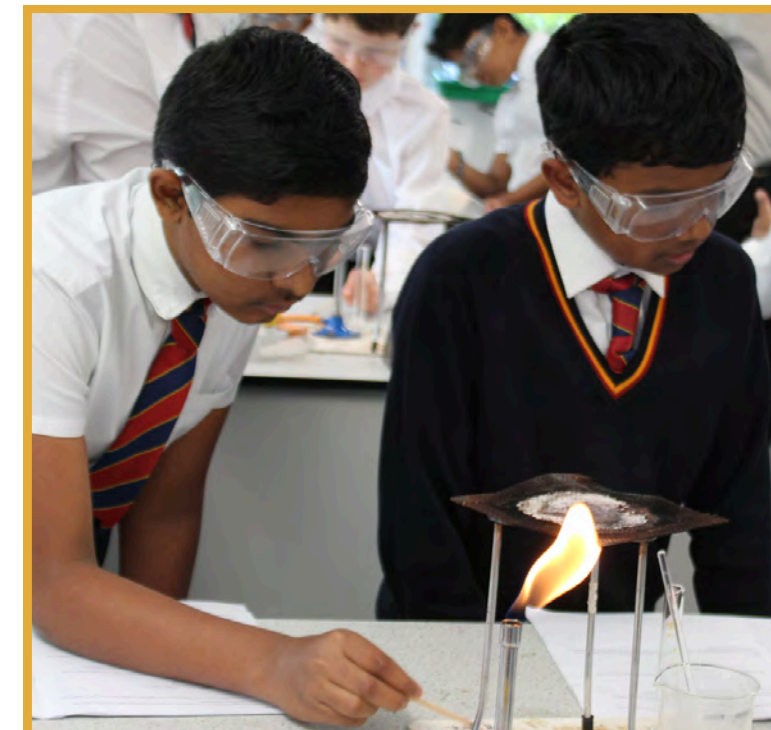
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The WHSB community now has almost 1,300 pupils and their families, around 140 staff members, and thousands of Old Westcliffians who read our publications, attend our events, and follow us on social media. We would like to offer your business or organisation the opportunity to advertise in our termly School Magazine The Westcliff Diary (distributed in both hard copy and digitised versions), and in the programmes printed for the multitude of events taking place throughout the School Year, including Annual Speech Day, Sports Day, and numerous dramatic and musical productions and concerts.

Annual advertising costs, to feature in each of the three termly issued editions of The Westcliff Diary throughout the academic year, are as follows:

Corporate Advertising
Quarter Page Advert £275
Half Page Advert £500
Full Page Advert £800 (three-year commitment £2,000)

In addition, our corporate sponsors will be prominently name-checked in each of our event programmes. For further information, please contact Mr S Rothern (Director of Finance and Accounting), Mrs D Holley (the Headmaster's Personal Assistant), or Mrs J Clarke (Community Development Assistant), on 01702 475443.



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION AMAZON WISHLIST

There is one further method of giving your financial support to the School. The WHSB Parents' Association has very kindly offered to host a wedding-style "Wish List" of items, available to purchase on behalf of the School, on Amazon.

Certain items are 'nice to have' and provide students with that richer educational experience that WHSB aims to provide. They are, however, difficult to fund from core department budgets. The Amazon Wishlist consists of low-cost items that have been carefully selected by Heads of Department and other staff, including books, Physical Education equipment, Art materials and club resources, enabling Old Westcliffians, parents and others to make voluntary contributions towards school supplies should they wish to do so.

Items included in the list will cost from as little as £5 and will continue to be added throughout the School year as needed. Purchases can be dropped into the School Reception or delivered directly by Amazon to WHSB, with donations being respectfully publicised or remaining anonymous, whichever is preferable.

To view and make purchases for the School from the Parents' Association Amazon Wishlist, please use the following link or scanning the QR code:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/2AMHT2KY5NZ98?ref_=wl_share



The Parents' Association would like to thank all those who continue to support their operations in these and all other ways.

Mr S Rothern, Director of Finance and Accounting

OLD WESTCLIFFIANS' ANNUAL DINNER

We were delighted to welcome Old Westcliffians back to the School on the evening of Friday 13 September 2024 for our Annual Reunion Dinner. This was a wonderful opportunity for Old Westcliffians from across the generations to share news, enjoy friendship, and show their ongoing support for our current pupils. Guests were also treated to live music from some of our talented musicians from across the School.





CCF ANNUAL PASS OFF PARADE AND DINNER



We were delighted to see so many Old Westcliffians returning to the School for our Combined Cadet Force Dinner this year. Our guest of honour for this important occasion was His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, and I am most grateful to her for supporting our School and its CCF, and for taking the time to inspect the Pass Off Parade, to join us for dinner, and to engage so positively with the cadets and CCF volunteer staff, all of which made the occasion particularly special.

This was a special dinner following our Pass Off parade at which many cadets were celebrating their achievements through awards and promotions. We were also said farewell to Mr Bleakley who held the role of Contingent Commander since 2012, expressing our sincere thanks for his outstanding service to the CCF, and were pleased that so many of our cadets from the early days could join us for that occasion.

Headmaster



DIARY NOTE FOR FORMER CCF CADETS WHO SERVED 2012 - 2024

We shall be holding our 2025 Pass Off Parade and Annual Dinner towards the end of the Summer Term 2025. The date will be published in the next edition of the Old Westcliffian Newsletter, and in the Summer Edition of The Westcliff Diary. Please keep an eye open for the date, as this will be a further opportunity to catch up with fellow cadets from past years, as well as meeting and encouraging current pupils serving in our contingent.

CCF VOLUNTEER STAFF

Both the School and CCF cadets owe so much to our superb team of adult volunteers who, through their own time and commitment, shape these wonderful and life-changing experiences for the cadets at WHSB. We know through our communications with former cadets from the School that many miss the camaraderie of the CCF when they move on, and the opportunities they sought to engage with field training and community service.

Should any former CCF cadet living in the local area wish to volunteer their time towards supporting the WHSB cadets at weekly training sessions or other events, please do not hesitate to make contact with Mr Andy Baggs, Contingent Commander, as we would be delighted to hear from you. This would be an opportunity to serve with the existing team of volunteers in their work, and full training would be provided by the MoD and School as necessary. We look forward to hearing from you.



SERVICES OF REMEMBRANCE 2024

Our Annual Remembrance Service was held in the School Hall on Monday 11 November 2024 and pupils shared hymns, readings, prayers, and music to remember the fallen. During the Service our School Captain, Rafael, laid a wreath in memory of those from the School who gave their lives in service during World War II, or in other conflicts. A guard of honour was formed by our CCF cadets who supported our service, during which the Standards were dipped for the two-minute silence.

Our CCF cadets also offered their annual support to local Primary Schools at their respective Remembrance Services on 11 November, providing similar ceremonial duties and readings for the younger pupils.

The Remembrance weekend was a busy time for our pupils as they participated in Services of Remembrance across our City. On Sunday 10 November, the CCF participated in Southend's Annual Remembrance Service, parading around 100 cadets at the Cenotaph in Southend. During this service, wreaths were laid by our School Captain, and by Mr Birdseye, President of the OWA. We were also pleased to be joined at the Cenotaph by former WHSB pupils and cadets, staff and friends of the School.

Our CCF cadets supported the Remembrance Service at Stow Maries Aerodrome on Sunday, and were also pleased to provide a guard of honour, ushering and ceremonial duties for the Orpheus Singers' annual charity Concert of Remembrance for the Royal British Legion at Kings Road URC, Westcliff on the Saturday evening.

This participation is something in which the pupils and staff take considerable pride, as we remember the service and sacrifice of others. We commend and thank the pupils for their respectful participation in these events, and we are proud of them all. Our particular thanks to Lt Col Baggs (Contingent Commander), and to all the CCF staff for their superb coordination, participation and planning in connection with these various events.

Headmaster



At the City's Cenotaph



WHSB's Cadets at Stow Maries Aerodrome



WHSB's CCF Cadets on parade at the Southend's Cenotaph, Sunday 10 November 2024



Above: Headmaster pictured with Old Westcliffians and former WHSB CCF Cadets, Jack Morris (left) and Jonathan Travers



Right (centre): Deputy Lieutenant-Mr Tim Gocher OBE DL (Old Westcliffian) took the salute at the Cenotaph this year

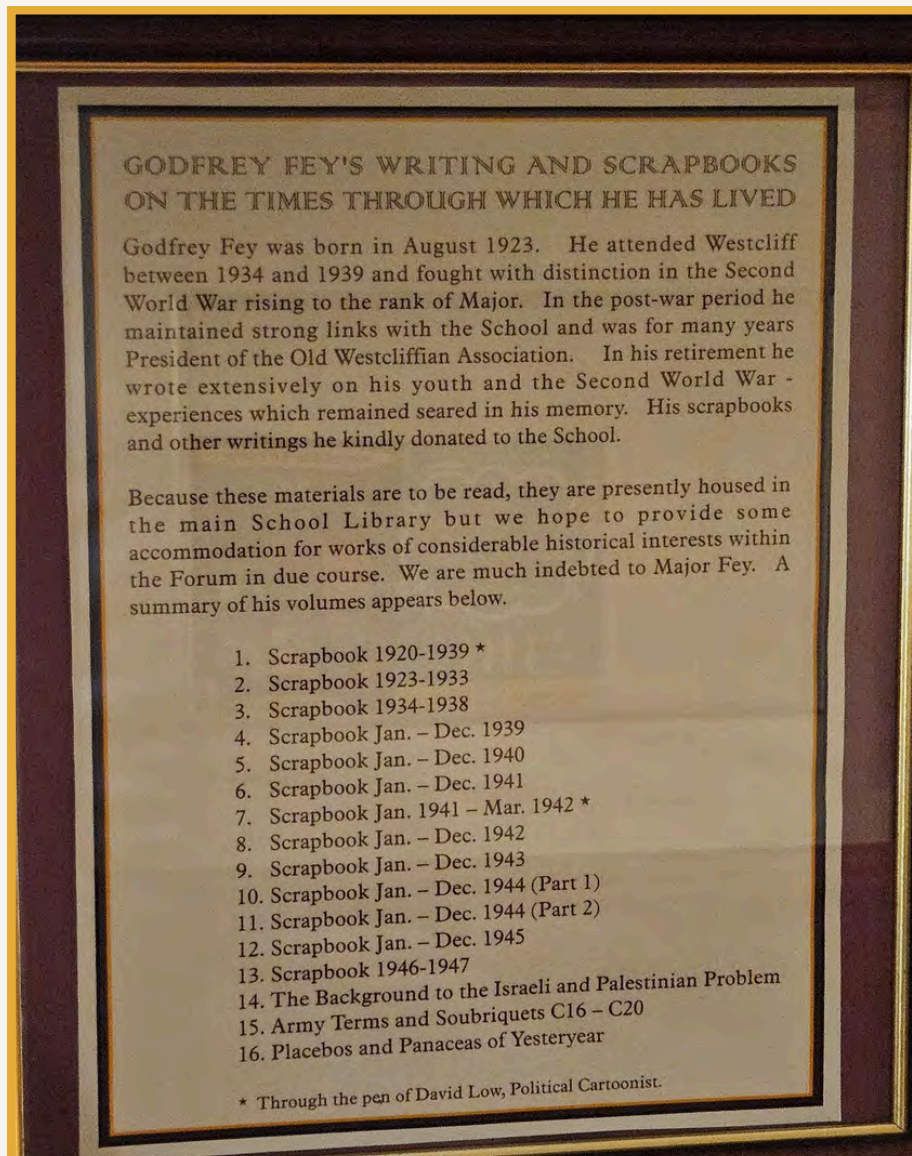
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**MAJOR GODFREY FEY, OLD WESTCLIFFIAN (1934-1939)**

During the Summer Term 2024, the School commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Normandy D-Day Landings on 6 June 1944 with a co-ordinated research project, undertaken by pupils across Year Groups and within their Houses. Utilising books from the School Library, articles, documentaries and online resources they were able to learn more about what happened on this historic day, a monumental turning point in WWII. We know from the School Archives that many Old Westcliffians served in the Second World War, one of whom was the late Major Godfrey Fey (Old Westcliffian, 1934-1939). Godfrey Fey enjoyed a distinguished military career both during and after the Second World War, rising to the rank of Major in 1963. Indeed, he saw service in the Middle East and Hong Kong as well as being present at the D-Day Landings and the subsequent Liberation of France.

From material contained within the School Archive and information displayed within the School corridors, we know that Godfrey Fey was a keen supporter of his old School, maintaining strong links during the post-war period and taking great pride in being President of the Old Westcliffian Association for a number of years. In his retirement he wrote extensively on his youth and the Second World War. His scrapbooks and other writings, along with a miniature replica set of his medals, he kindly donated to the School and which are now held within the School's Centenary Room and Archive.

Following Major Fey's death in March 2012, in Winchester at the age of 89, former WHSB Headmaster Andrew Baker wrote a moving tribute to him in the Westcliff Diary, recalling how Godfrey Fey "retained a great affection for his School and after the War returned for many years, to the Annual Service of Remembrance, booking himself into the Westcliff Hotel, taking a taxi to the School gates in good time and presenting himself on the platform wearing the medals reflecting his distinguished service which meant so much to him. He found those Services so profoundly moving but never failed to be uplifted by the sight of his old School, more than sixty years on, coming together in sombre mood to remember the fallen."

At the School's Annual Service of Remembrance each year, when a wreath is laid in memory of all those from the School who gave their lives in both World Wars and in other conflicts, we also remember Major Godfrey Fey, who would have attended such Services at WHSB in years gone by. We are reminded of his contribution to the School and its community, for which we are extremely grateful.



CHRISTMAS TREE PRESENTATION

In an annual tradition of recent years, it will be a pleasure to welcome Mr Terry Birdseye, President of the OWA, to the School on 6 December 2024 for the OWA's presentation of a beautiful Christmas Tree to our current pupils.

Each year, following the presentation, a team of pupils decorates this special tree which has pride of place in the School Hall throughout the festive season.

We are grateful to all members of the OWA for their generous donation which adds sparkle to our Christmas celebrations.



Mr Terry Birdseye, President of the OWA, presents Christmas Tree to Headmaster and pupils, December 2023

JOIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOR THE FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS

We are looking forward to celebrating the festive season through our wonderful programme of events, and we hope to see many Old Westcliffians at the School this year, to join us on those occasions.

These events have been published through The Westcliff Diary, but if you do not already have your ticket, these should be reserved in advance via TicketSource: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whsb?sd=1>

CHRISTMAS WITH THE BIG BAND

Friday 6th December 2024, 7.30pm - 10.00pm

The festive lights may be twinkling, the tinsel may be sparkling, but the festive season has not really begun until the Big Band takes the stage for their annual Christmas show. This hotly anticipated event features the Westcliff Jazz Band and other groups, and is headlined by the Westcliff Big Band.

Expect to hear a set of recognisable hits covering a variety of styles, from Herbie Hancock to Marvin Gaye, from The White Stripes to Carly-Rae Jepsen - this is an eclectic evening of funky music and Christmas crackers that should not be missed!



BOX OF DELIGHTS

Wednesday 11 -Friday 13th December 2024, 7.30pm (Doors open at 7.00pm)

What do Harry Potter, the Lord of the Rings, and the Chronicles of Narnia have in common? They are all books that became successful films. They all feature creatures of all sizes, such as the Balrog and the House Elf (a good title perhaps for a children's story). But most pertinently here, all three modern megahits draw something of their narrative from the seminal 1935 work, The Box of Delights.

Few have heard of this great classic novel and it has rarely been in vogue, but its influence has been profound – the book was innovative in launching ideas of flying cars and battling wizards, and an orphan boy at the midst of it all (sound familiar?). This modern script adaptation was put together by Piers Torday, the children's author. Torday won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize in 2014 for The Dark Wild, and followed this up with the completion of his father's unfinished novel manuscript The Death of An Owl. Torday first adapted The Box of Delights for performance at Wilton's Music Hall in 2017, and the show was recently revived by the Royal Shakespeare Company, as their Stratford Christmas play of last year.

We are very much looking forward to staging this Christmas Classic, and look forward to welcoming you into our converted Library Theatre for an early Christmas treat suitable for all the family.

Westcliff High School for Boys Presents

The Box of Delights
By Piers Torday, based on the novel by John Masefield

This is an amateur production made possible by the support of the Curtis Brown Group
Wednesday 11 - Friday 13 December 2024 @7:30pm

LEAVERS' CERTIFICATE COLLECTION

Monday 16th December 2024, 3.45pm – 5.00pm

To coincide with the end of the first term at University, our leavers from the Summer 2024 are invited to the Sixth Form Forum to collect their A Level certificates. This informal event offers our newest cohort of Old Westcliffians, and recent School leavers, an opportunity to share stories about their new adventures with their ex-peers and former teachers. Teaching and Support Staff members will attend and are always keen to hear how their ex-students have settled into life post WHSB.

The event is free to attend and complimentary refreshments will be available. The leavers are also most welcome to join us in the evening for our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols, and tickets for this event can also be reserved via TicketSource.



Summer 2023 Leavers returning to WHSB in December 2023 for Certificate Collection

ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Monday 16th December 2024, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

This final evening event of the Autumn Term each year is a wonderful tradition at Westcliff High School for Boys and, for many, the start of Christmas. Our School community, together with friends and families, gather in the final week of the term to celebrate the season together, through our Festival of Lessons and Carols. Our Service features readings, and hymns sung by the congregation.

The Westcliff Choir will perform both traditional and modern carols, all illuminated by the warm glow of the Christmas tree.

Pupils, parents, staff, Old Westcliffians, and friends of the School are warmly invited to join us for this joyful occasion, and also to share in some mulled wine, mince pies, and coffee.



GIFTING FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON....
....while raising funds for Westcliff High School for Boys



Visit the School's online shop to view and order a range of gift ideas, including those which celebrate the School's history and record our Centenary milestone which we celebrated in 2020
 Last day for Christmas online orders (UK ONLY) Friday 13 December 2024

- Centenary History by Dr Alan White - £20
- Centenary Tie (Silk) - £20
- Centenary Tie (Polyester) - £9
- Centenary Waterman Pen (engraved) - £20
- Centenary Mug - £5
- Centenary Pin Badge - £2.50

Centenary Ties

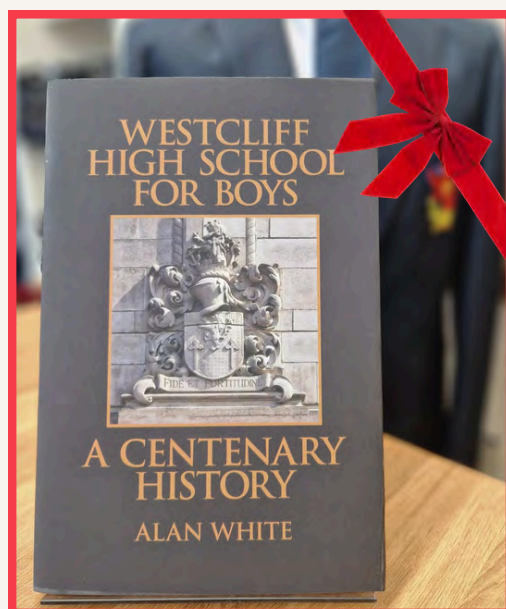
Remaining popular with our pupils for ceremonial and/or other special days and events, this item is back in stock and available to current pupils, Old Westcliffians and, of course, their families and friends purchasing these items as gifts. Centenary ties are available in silk or polyester.

Westcliff High School for Boys Online Shop
<https://whsforboys.shoptill-e.com/>

Each item ordered helps to raise much needed funds to support the education and extra-curricular provision for current pupils at the School.



Thank you for your support



LEAVING A LEGACY TO WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

SUPPORTING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF WESTCLIFFIANS

We recognise that Friends of the School, particularly Old Westcliffians may feel that they would like to 'give something back' to the School and that this is not always easy during one's lifetime. Leaving a legacy to WHSB in your will is a way of supporting the School after you have left us.

Legacies are usually unrestricted gifts, allowing the School to support current priorities; however, we will always try to meet a donor's wishes if they have a specific area of interest in the School. Current priorities include refurbishment of aged sporting facilities, investment in outdoor seating & shelter facilities, and continued support of enriching extra-curricular activities. Longer term areas for development concern theatre and stage facilities to support the School's excellent Music & Drama activities.

The 1920 Society has been established as a means by which we can thank, during their lifetime, those who have left a gift in their will to the School. By confirming to the Headmaster that you have made a bequest to the School, you will automatically become a member of The 1920 Society.

Members will receive a special gift bearing the School and 1920 logo, and may also receive invitations to School events.

A gift in your will can be a simple way of making a significant donation to the School that is unaffordable during one's lifetime, and one which allows many people to make a meaningful contribution to future generations of WHSB students.

Making a bequest is simple: it can be included in a new will or added as a codicil to an existing will.

We recommend that you obtain legal advice before deciding to include a legacy in your will, or adding a codicil to an existing will, to ensure your interests are protected and your wishes recorded accurately.

We understand that leaving a legacy is a private matter but if you feel able to inform us of your intention it would help the School plan for the future. Publicity around your legacy can range from entirely unannounced to full details published; there may be some benefit to the School in publicising the existence of legacies but any publicity would be in line with your own wishes.

The form can be found here www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/owa or by scanning the QR code below.

This form enables you to submit your intention to include a legacy to Westcliff High School for Boys in your will.

The form is merely a statement of intention, it does not legally commit you. It will be treated in the strictest confidence, and if you wish to remain anonymous please let us know.

Contact: Stephen Rotheron, Director of Finance and Accounting, rothons@whsb.essex.sch.uk



Please follow Westcliff High School for Boys on Facebook and LinkedIn where you can find out about the latest developments and events taking place at the School. We would be delighted to welcome you back to the School to see what is going on.

We welcome your comments and contributions for future editions. Please contact Mrs Clarke in the Community Development Office on 01702 475443 or via email at community@whsb.essex.sch.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.



OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

Tel: 01702 475443 Email: office@whsb.essex.sch.uk Web: www.whsb.essex.sch.uk

FIDE ET FORTITUDINE