OLD FLAMES

Spring 2025

The Old Silcoatians' Newsletter

Welcome from our Alumni Officer, Corrina Slaski.

Dear Old Silcoatian, I am always delighted to receive positive feedback following the publication of the Old Flames every term. The fact that it is being read by many of our Old Silcoatians does make the time I put in to it worth it. Please do keep sending in your stories and photographs, without them the publication would not exist.

Please contact me at Alumni@Silcoates.org.uk with any stories, memories or feedback.

NEW HEAD & CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

We have some exciting times ahead at Silcoates. Firstly, Mr David Payling, has been appointed as our Interim Chair of Governors.

David attended Silcoates from 1982 to 1993, serving as Head Boy in his Upper Sixth year. He joined the Board of Governors in 2007 and has been actively involved in the governance of the School for the past eighteen years. Having read Economics at the University of Cambridge followed by qualifying as a Chartered Accountant at Deloitte, his career in financial services led him to live and work in London, Dublin, New York and Zambia. David has been Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee since 2015 working with the Head and Bursar on the long-term financial strategy of the School. Mr Andrew Jeffery, also an Old Silcoatian and long-standing Governor, continues in his role as Vice Chair.

Mr Payling

Secondly, our current Head, Mr Chris Wainman, is leaving the school after four years, in which time he has successfully driven significant advancements in the School's academic performance, pupil outcomes, and growth in pupil numbers. His leadership has strengthened the School's local and national reputation. He will be taking up the Headship of his previous school, Tranby.

Mr King

Mr Phil King will be taking up the position of Head of Silcoates in the new academic year. Phil has extensive leadership experience in independent education joining Silcoates from Birkdale School, Sheffield, where he has been Deputy Head for fourteen years in both academic and pastoral roles, as well as being the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Phil qualified as an English teacher in 1999 and has taught in five schools across South Yorkshire in that time. In his spare time, he enjoys running, playing the guitar, and walking, he is excited to support sport, music, and Duke of Edinburgh activities across the school.

Phil is passionate about holistic education, academic excellence, pupil voice, and inclusion, aligning perfectly with our values at Silcoates. We are excited to welcome him as he takes up his post in September 2025.

UPCOMING EVENTS & REUNION OPPORTUNITIES

Friends of Silcoates

As previously mentioned, the Silcoates Parents Association has been relaunched as The Friends of Silcoates Association. This revamped format welcomes not just our parents but also Old Silcoatians, parents of alumni, current staff, and former staff as volunteers.

This gives Old Silcoatians the opportunity to be more involved in events at school, and to come along and help at things such as the Christmas Fair or the Tom Burrow Cup. You can also introduce new events that are aimed at the whole Silcoates Community.

It's also a wonderful opportunity to learn about our plans for the academic year and connect with others.

Please email FOS@silcoates.org.uk for more information.

May 2025

This year sees the return of the Ladies Lunch, being hosted by The Friends of Silcoates on 10 May. Ticket information will be sent out nearer the time.

June 2025

The Old Silcoatians' Day will be held on 7 June, please make sure that you put this date in your diaries!!

The Summer Ball is on 29 June and Old Silcoatians are very welcome to attend this event. Why not make it a class reunion? The leavers from 30 years ago have already booked two tables, please get in touch as soon as possible if you would like tickets.

October 2025

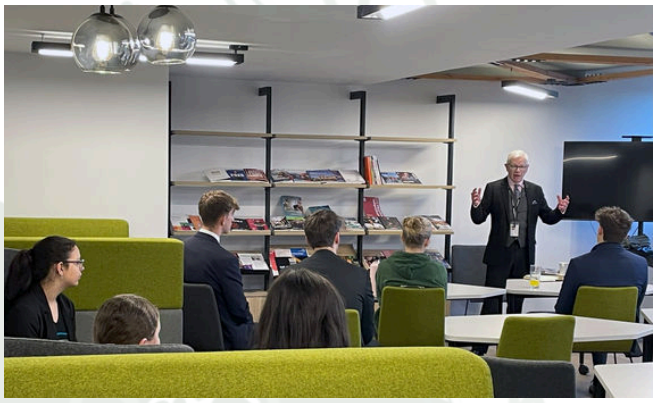
The Tom Burrow cup is scheduled for 11 October, Old Silcoatians are very much encouraged to come along.

More information regarding events and communications can be accessed via our updated Facebook page and new LinkedIn group. Please contact me with any Alumni related feedback. Alumni@Silcoates.org.uk

PREVIOUS EVENTS

Our Careers Breakfasts are an integral part of our careers offering at Silcoates and we try and encourage as many Old Silcoatians as possible to come along and present to our students. This term we have managed to get two Old Silcoatians to come in.

Mr Andrew Jeffery, Old Silcoatian and School Governor presented 'The World of Work' Interviews Talk with our Year 13 pupils.
Andrew shared his journey through the automotive industry, having worked with iconic brands such as Land Rover, Jaguar, and Volkswagen. Now a Management Consultant, Mentor, and published author, he offered invaluable advice on interviews, applications, and standing out in competitive fields.
Through real-world examples, Andrew highlighted key traits of successful candidates, and offered tips on how our students can present themselves confidently in both university interviews and their future careers.



For our latest Careers Breakfast, we were delighted to welcome Old Silcoatian, Mr Ben Bell from 39 Park Square Chambers, back to Silcoates to discuss his role as a Criminal Barrister. Pupils from Years 9-13 had the fantastic opportunity to hear about Ben's journey into law, the academic dedication required, and the many different aspects of being a Criminal Barrister.
Ben also highlighted the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance, as well as the value of being a well-rounded individual, something he fondly reflected on from his time at Silcoates. His talk provided invaluable insights and inspired many pupils to consider careers in law.
Ben was also presented with a tie and an Old Silcoatian pin badge by our students to thank him for coming in.

Mr Andrew Jeffery also joined us for our Question Time event for an evening of debate & discussion.
A panel of six professionals from diverse sectors including, Law, Church of England, Veterinary Care, PR, and Business will share their insights and opinions on some of today's most pressing topics. This event was open to all parents and pupils in Years 10-13.

SILCOATES QUESTION TIME

Hosted by Mr Verinder

THE PANEL

SILCOATES QUESTION TIME

RACHAEL JOHNSON
Director at *Social* PR Agency, Leeds

PHILIP HARRIS
Vicar and Ultra Marathon Runner

DOMINIC CODY
Director of Technology, Distributed Cloud - *Google*

ANDREW JEFFERY
School Governor and Management Consultant

MELANIE FULLER
CEO at *The Pet Vet*

NEIL BENTLEY
Chief Risk Officer and General Counsel (Europe) at *TransUnion*

WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN DOING!

Old Silcoatian, Robbie Cruikshanks (Class of 2015), is making waves in education policy!

Now a Senior Researcher for Higher Education at the Education Policy Institute, Robbie is helping shape vital conversations about education in the UK. Last year, he contributed to a range of impactful research and reports, including a ground-breaking solo report on the 'School Funding Model: Effect of Falling School Rolls', which provided critical insights into the financial challenges facing state education.

In December, Robbie's recent work took him to 10 Downing Street, where he met with special advisors from the Department of Education to discuss higher education policy.

We're thrilled to share that Old Silcoatian, Genesis (Class of 2024), has been appointed as the Methodist Youth President for 2025/2026!

Genesis, a member of Emmanuel Methodist Church near Barnsley, was elected by 1600 young Methodists from across the country. This national role involves working full-time to represent and amplify the voices of children and young people within the Methodist Church, ensuring they are involved in every aspect of Church life.

We are so proud of Genesis and can't wait to see the positive impact they will make in this inspiring position!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

James Connelly, Silcoates 1968-76, has sent in a short piece he wrote about a master at Silcoates, Mr R.C. Andrews. He taught James when he was at the School in the sixties and seventies and he remembers him as being an important and formative influence.

Memories of R. C. Andrews

Looking back on my time at Silcoates, I firmly believe that the teacher who had the most influence on me was Mr R.C. Andrews. I remember many other teachers, many of them remarkable and interesting in their different ways. But for me it was Crow who stands out from the crowd. I realised this on the day that I left school in July 1976 and that realisation has only deepened with the years.

We always knew Andrews as Crow. He had a forwardly flopping mane of jet black hair, and he was tall and swooping in his black gown. To an earlier generation of Silcoatians he was known as Max, a nickname derived from his likeness to James Maxton, the Independent Labour (ILP) MP for Glasgow Bridgeton from 1922 to 1946. Google the name and you'll see why.

Mr Andrews was the housemaster of Yonge's. He presided loomingly over house prayers once a week. He was popularly supposed to be an atheist and probably was. He used to intone, very swiftly, in his breathless voice, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen." His breathlessness was caused by having only one working lung; I believe he suffered from tuberculosis in his earlier years.

Mr Andrews was a witty and urbane presence throughout the school. He dealt with us all benignly, but he was not soft. He knew how to dispense justice, but one never felt demeaned or degraded by the experience.

Mr Andrews had a ready wit. My school reports from fifty years ago are worth repeated reading not so much for compliments on my accomplishments, or despair at my lack of them, but principally because of the witty and shrewd comments made by Crow.

Mr Andrews tried and failed to teach me German: but Die Lorelei taught me a little. I recall listening to, and singing along with, "Die Lorelei" in the school hall where Crow would ceremonially place a 78rpm record on the school gramophone. It was sung by Richard Tauber, recorded in 1939. Following Tauber's rendition we would all join in, after our fashion. Such experiences take root deeply in youthful souls. On a recent visit to Silcoates a friend and I sang as much as we could remember of "Die Lorelei." He was of the generation preceding mine, but we were united in and by our memories of Mr Andrews.

I didn't discover for many years after leaving Silcoates that Mr Andrews had published a number of very interesting articles over the years in various academic journals. I first spotted this in the mid 1980s when my eye was caught by a copy of the Hibbert Journal containing an article entitled "A Nazi Prophet and Philosopher" about Erwin Kolbenhayer. More recently I investigated whether he had published anything else and was rewarded by discovery of the following:

"A Nazi Prophet and Philosopher: Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer", Hibbert Journal, Oct. 1944, pp. 21-8.

"The Poetry of E. G. Kolbenheyer", The Modern Language Review, Jan. 1946, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 55-60.

"Two German War Poets Rudolf Hagelstange & Hans Egon Holtusen", German Life and Letters, 1951, pp. 115-22.

"A Novel from Eastern Germany" (Abschied, By Johannes R. Becher), German Life and Letters, 1952, pp. 286-91.

"The Poetry of Hermann Hesse: A Birthday Tribute (1877-1952)", German Life and Letters 1953, pp. 117-27.

"An East German Novelist: Anna Seghers", German Life and Letters, 1955, pp. 121-9.

"The Novel as a Political Vade-Mecum: Willi Bredel's Verwandte und Bekannte", German Life and Letters, 1957, pp. 131-8.

"Re-Education Through Literature: Erwin Strittmatter's Tinko", German Life and Letters, 1961, pp. 204-9.

"Anna Seghers's Die Entscheldung", German Life and Letters, 1962, 259-63.
"A Comic Novel from East Germany: Manfred Bieler: Bonifax oder der Matrose in Der Flasche", German Life and Letters, 1967, pp. 101-6.
"The German School-Story: Some Observations on Paul Schalluck and Thomas Valentin" German Life and Letters, 1970, pp.103-12.

Mr Andrews clearly possessed an intellectual hinterland entirely hidden from most of us who knew him at Silcoates. I wish I had known more about this at the time.
A final thought. Mr Andrews used to subscribe to the New Statesman and place it in the school library. I used to devour it every week when I reached the Sixth Form during which time I switched from natural sciences to social sciences. I began to subscribe to the New Statesman myself, reading it every Friday morning over breakfast. I went to university to study politics and economics and after a few years of research, book dealing and lecturing in Southampton, I returned to Yorkshire at the University of Hull. Maybe Mr Andrews failed to teach me German, but he succeeded in instilling in me an interest in politics and the life of the mind. Perhaps great teachers are not marked solely by their overt influence but also by the oblique (and often deeper influence) of their lived example. Thank you, Crow.

These photos show James in 1974 in the Monitors' Room, which was adjacent to the Masters' Common Room – you can see the School Hall through the window. The person standing behind James is John Clark. James believes that he went on to have a career with the Forestry Commission.
And the other, is James today!

HONOURING OLD SILCOATIANS

Sadly, each year, we hear of the sad passing of Old Silcoatians. These dear Alumni are usually remembered at our Remembrance Service and their obituaries can, with agreement, be posted on The Old Silcoatians' Facebook page. Unfortunately as the Remembrance Service did not go ahead this year, I have printed a list below of those that have died since last November that I have been notified of, this is in order of notification. I will, from now on, print them each term in this newsletter. If you wish to notify us of the passing of a relative or friend, please do so by emailing alumni@silcoates.org.uk, please let us know what information you would like us to publish and where.

Dr Frank J Heron
Sarah Walton

Thank you, as always, for your support,

Corrina Slaski

Alumni@Silcoates.org.uk

If you have any memories to share, please do email alumni@silcoates.org.uk

SILCOATES