



Hills news

alumni.hrsfc.ac.uk



Alumni news from Hills Road Sixth Form College.

alumni

Summer 2026



Class of 1996 reunites at Hills

We were so pleased to welcome back our alumni from Class of 1996 for Hills Road's first reunion. The class brought incredible energy, stories, and lots of photos looking back on their college days.

Principal Jo Trump welcomed the alumni back and shared a view of the college today, along with its many changes since the '90s. We surprised guests with a display of memories from their time here, featuring photographs, Hills Road Journals, newspaper clippings, and prospectuses straight from the 1994-1996 archive. The former principal, Colin Greenhalgh, and former Head of Art and Design, Ted Coney, also paid the alumni a visit to reminisce together.

Our wonderful volunteers, Hills Road's current Year 12s, led the former students on a tour, giving a true insight into life at the college and comparing what it's like to be student today and 30 years ago. The group remembered when the college was much smaller and all the students



could fit in The Hall for assemblies. The alumni shared stories which took them straight back to the nostalgia of the '90s – like the rotation of the same songs on the jukebox in the Basement (now 'the Hub'), which the students hired themselves.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make this reunion possible, and our honoured guests – the Class of 1996.



An interview with Hills alumna Rachel Lambert-Forsyth, CEO of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Rachel studied Biology, Chemistry, Psychology and Theatre Studies at Hills Road between 2001 and 2003, and shares her insights from over 17 years' experience in the professional body and membership sector.

What aspects of your time at Hills Road helped shape your leadership approach and professional values?

Being part of a hockey team has been a central pillar to my life and my time at Hills was no different. We were highly competitive, winning most matches and competing in County tournaments, and the Millennium Games. Sports teaches resilience, teamwork, grit, and the importance of enjoying the moment – whether winning or losing. Those lessons have shaped my leadership style.

You've guided major organisations through transformation and challenge. What has mattered most in leading teams through uncertainty?

Humanity and honesty. Change is difficult, even when people agree with it. I've learnt that being open about my own worries has made me a more human leader and encourages others to share their concerns. This creates space to reconnect with the purpose behind the change, focus on the future and help everyone see their role in it.

You've spent much of your career in the membership and professional body sector. What draws you to this sector?

I love learning, and being surrounded by experts is a source of inspiration. Membership bodies are also vital for developing the next generation of talent. It's incredibly rewarding to play a small part in someone else's success through the opportunities we provide.



Which achievements stand out as defining moments in your career?

Keeping the British Pharmacological Society moving during the pandemic. I joined in March 2020 and the next 18 months were a wild ride! I am proud we kept everyone safe, while also contributing to public understanding through our work on medicine regulation, clinical trials, and vaccine development. It was an extraordinary leadership experience.



Rachel Lambert-Forsyth
Class of 2003

What advice would you give to Hills Road students aspiring to leadership roles?

Be brave – reach out, network, and ask questions. I love it when I can share my insights and experiences with potential future leaders.

Take opportunities – career paths are rarely straightforward but unexpected routes can be the most rewarding.

Be yourself – authenticity matters. I once tried to model others' leadership styles, but the best results came when I embraced my own compassionate style. You can be empathetic while making tough decisions. Honest leadership is impactful.

Alumnus Mike Jeffries reminisces on his school days in the '70s.

Through an impressive archive of his schoolbooks, photos and art, Mike journals his experiences and friendships as the boys' school transitioned into Hills Road Sixth Form College. Read on for an excerpt from his memoir *Punting at Night – A High School & Hills Road '70s*.

1969

"Cambridgeshire High School for Boys was far enough away across the city, on Hills Road, a long morning bus ride. The first day I set off, blazer with castle crest, black trousers, smart black shoes, white shirt, school tie, school cap, satchel, school scarf handy, uniformed, already made distinctive and separate. Also clutching a fountain pen, everything had to be written in fountain pen with proper ink, no biro, no felt tips. I'd never held a fountain pen before. The school was substantial and solid, set back a bit from the road. The main building was all high ceilinged rooms, making you feel tinier still, flashes of polished tiles and elegant licks of Art Nouveau ironmongery supporting the polished wood of the bannisters.



1974

Us pupils were aware the school was due to change but we would have changed anyway, stepping up to the sixth form, no longer in school uniform, focused on A levels and university. We did not give it much thought, nor did the change over feel very odd. Most fifth years stayed on,

certainly all my friends did. Everyone thought the arrivals of girls would be astonishing, but it was not. The girls who had chosen to come to Hills Road were well briefed, and way ahead of us. They slotted in to our world easily and we carried on much as before, probably to their amusement.

1975

A level Biology, Chemistry and Geography plus Dada and animation. The edge of the Fens, the High School hemmed in by colleges. Cambridge set us loose, nothing was beyond us, except possibly the world everyone else had to endure. Not that we knew, we just carried on the everyday of lunch-time absurdist theatre, after school geography games and trips to the ICA and I am sketching folk around the school and in exams for collages."

[Read the full article here](#)

After Hills Road, Mike went on to study Zoology, then a PhD in Ecology. He has spent most of his career in the university sector, recently retiring from Northumbria University.



"That Hills Road mix of science and arts that runs through my time at school was a great foundation so that, although I specialised in ecology and conservation, I also used a lot of creative methods – getting undergrads to make comics, animations and photography as part of their work. I blame my art teacher Ted Coney, he was great."

Mike Jeffries, Class of 1976

Former Head of History, Sean Lang, reflects on how teaching at Hills Road influenced his career path.

“I came to Hills Road in 1992 having taught at Netherhall and lectured in Education at Exeter University, and Hills Road felt like a similar combination of school and university. I took over a highly regarded department which had been led with great distinction by Charles Malyon; I had an HMI Inspection in my first term which judged the department Outstanding, but that was a tribute to Charles rather than to my couple of months in post!

“Hills Road was fairly formal in style but very flexible in its outlook: if you wanted to experiment, you could – and I did!”

Sean Lang

I had already started writing and sometimes reporting for the *Times Educational Supplement* and I carried on doing that at Hills Road – everything I wrote credited the college, which was very good PR. I was also high up in the Historical Association, which involved talking with ministers and civil servants, even the Privy Council at one point, as well as doing a lot of broadcasting, and I quickly found that being Head of History at Hills Road gave you a certain weight and esteem in the public eye.

I learned a huge amount about teaching and students and so on – and choral singing! – but also a lot of history. I taught whole periods I had never studied before, which I found tremendously stimulating, and when later I became a lecturer at Anglia Ruskin, my Hills Road experience gave me a breadth of historical knowledge that was far greater

than you usually find in university lecturers. I was delighted to encounter quite a few of my old Hills Road students at ARU, though whether they were as delighted to see me again I don't know!

Three things particularly stand out. I got money from the Council of Europe to run an international simulation exercise based on the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles. We had students from seven different European countries: I remember my students being taken aback by the ultra-nationalist views of the Bulgarians: no doubt they were equally surprised by my students' views! I recently followed that up with an international exercise based on the Nuremberg Trial, and again Hills Road took part. Then there were the foreign trips, to Rome and Sorrento and especially a wonderful exchange we had with a school in Parma. Finally, it was at Hills Road that I really started writing seriously for the theatre: a number of my scripts were staged, including an epic piece set in the American Revolution and an adaptation of Hermann Melville's *Billy Budd*. So in many ways, Hills Road set my career up just as much as it did for my students.”



Alumnus Greg Slater outlines his journey through a career in sustainable architecture and development.

“I remember Hills Road as the place where I made great friends, opened my eyes to a wider world and flourished (as did the length of my hair). The support of Stephen Tomkins, my form tutor, played a big part in me reaching my goal of a place at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University. I still have a wonderful letter from him after he heard I'd secured my first role as an architect in Bristol.

Friendships also flourished in Cambridge, centred around the goth band scene of the time and Hills Road's very own Hollow Land, as well as Strawberry Fayre, punting and Grantchester Meadows. Sadly, we didn't have such easy ways to stay in contact then, so hello Margaret Williams, Tom Fisher and many others if you're reading this.

As an architect, in Bristol and then London, I built considerable expertise in sustainable design and project delivery, particularly of housing. This took me to Cornwall in 2010; initially to manage the planning and design of what was to become the West Carclaze Garden Village, before becoming Head of Investment & Growth in Cornwall Council's Economic Growth Service. I was client lead for the delivery of two projects that won

Cornwall Sustainability Awards, one at the Eden Project and the other as part of the Garden Village. In 2023 I then secured the Carbon Neutral Award for the Council's housing development company.

At the start of 2025 I returned to the Isle of Man, where I have lifelong family connections. I am Housing Investment & Development Lead for the Manx Government and have two non-executive roles as a director of the Manx Wildlife Trust's commercial entity, Wildlife Ltd. and as a trustee of Peel Cathedral Quarter Trust, supporting plans to be a net zero exemplar.

I'm on LinkedIn and would be happy to hear from old friends as well as alumni pursuing sustainable careers that could benefit from an old hand's experiences. It isn't an easy path to follow, but that is no reason not to take it.”



Greg Slater
Class of 1988

Greg Slater studied Maths, Economics and Physics.



1988 May Ball with friends
Laura Platten, Margaret
Williams and Ruth Pelling.



Hollow Land gig
in the College hall.



With team picking up the
Cornwall Sustainability
Award in 2023.

“I was 16 and had just moved to Cambridge from Perth in Scotland. Hills Road seemed experimental, grown-up and cool. I was used to wearing a blazer and a tie. Now I could wear a greatcoat and have hair to my knees (not that I did).

I remember the teachers, of course. Mr Malyon, in History, was amazing (his glasses too). He taught me how to construct an essay. I know this is an overused word, but it was genuinely transformative. Mrs Purves was unbelievably patient, helping me get an A-Level in Latin. Dr Parry, in English, taught me to read the pre-read or don't bother to come. Everyone in business should know this. I'm glad I learned it young.

During the hot summer of 1976, Mr Malyon and some other teachers thought it would be fun to have a mini-gala at the Lido on Jesus Green. Sadly, as non-sporty flaneurs, we struggled to complete a length without gasping for breath.

I went on to Cambridge after Hills Road to do Archaeology and Anthropology. From there, I did a stint in advertising, working on Coca-Cola. For the past 40 years, I've worked in corporate design in London, Amsterdam and Paris.”

Tony Allen
Class of 1977

Tony studied History, English and Latin.

“Hills Road opened up learning for me. Thanks to everyone who was there and good luck to all at Hills in the future.”

Tony Allen

Would you like to feature in a future edition? Click or tap to get in touch



Saul Betmead de Chasteigner
Class of 1991

“Hills Road was a deeply important place for me. It was where I found my academic footing. But more than that, it was where I discovered a different kind of confidence, thanks to teachers whose influence extended far beyond the subjects they taught.

In particular, Ian Harvey, who made me endlessly curious about the world around me; Mr Cotterell, who showed us you could be serious about a subject without taking yourself too seriously; Neil (Jones), who taught me that making time to create is always time well spent; and our Headmaster, Colin Greenhalgh, who encouraged me to be more than I thought I could be.

From being EMEA Chief Strategy Officer for WPP to Chief Marketing Officer for the UN World Food Programme, I can draw a clear line from Hills Road to all of those experiences. But perhaps the clearest connection is a more recent discovery: a love of teaching.

Today, as an Associate Fellow and Tutor at Saïd Business School, Oxford, I find myself trying to do, in a small way, what those teachers did for me.”

Saul studied Art & Design, Biology and Geography.



RoboCon competition 2026



In the Easter holidays, young people came together at Hills Road from across the Cambridge area for the latest edition of the annual robotics competition, RoboCon. It's an opportunity for teams of 11-16 year olds from local schools to demonstrate their skill in creating their own autonomous robot, supported by Hills Road students and alumni.

This year was the biggest competition yet, with 16 teams in total, creating a lively atmosphere. Teams had been beavering away for months on their robots, completing several mini-challenges along the way to help them develop the knowledge and skills needed to compete to the best of their ability. All the necessary kit was provided by Hills Road, including a robot 'brain', a laptop and assorted electronics, with plenty of support from Hills Road students.

This year, Hills Road students devised



a *Hunger Games* theme, with teams tasked to design a tribute, or robot, to collect supply crates from the neutral zone at the centre of the arena and deliver them back to their home districts. Periodically, the Capitol gifted the tributes with supply drops which fell from the newly designed

Cornucopia above the neutral zone. Teams scored points for delivering their supplies successfully, including bonus points for stacking their supplies on top of each other.

Teams were very creative in designing their robots, which included a snail-like robot with a sticky suction cup and one which resembled a rhinoceros beetle with a long horn and pincers. The overall winning team was from the Perse – their robot extended a giant blanket to capture all the supply drops.

The competition was made possible through sponsorship from Darktrace, Frontier and Redgate.

Click or tap to find out how you can support RoboCon

During the Spring term, Year 13 Performing Arts students performed in their final practical exams in front of visiting examiners. Good luck to all our wonderful students as they await results from their exams.

Dance

Dance students performed their own work, choreographing fabulous group and solo pieces to a diverse range of music from Tchaikovsky to Jocelyn Pook.

Choreography by Danica Foster. *Woven Tension* performed by Arabella Green, Anna Carter, Harmony Hall.



Group Choreography by Rielle Sutherland. *Caged Freedom* performed by Leona Catchpole, Lee Murphy, Rielle Sutherland.



Aoibheann Leighton-Scott performing a monologue from *Adult Child/Dead Child*.



Hugh Devitt Williams, Eloise Scotland, Rex Brookes performing *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.



Clarice Cavill and Ava Henry performing a duologue from *Blood Wedding*.



Drama

Drama students performed a huge range of work they had chosen themselves, from fast-talking New York comedy, *The Odd Couple*, performed in a naturalistic style, to an intense piece of physical theatre from Lorca's great tragedy, *Blood Wedding*.

Starring the talented Y12 Enrichment group, *Much Ado About Nothing* brought Shakespeare's masterpiece of a romantic-comedy to life. Hotel Messina awaited the audience, and they enjoyed their stay!



Clarice Cavill cross examines Marnie Pounds watched by members of the ensemble in *Machinal*.

“Looking back on our production of *Machinal*, it is important to recognise the exceptional commitment shown by everyone involved. From the earliest rehearsals to the final performance, students brought dedication, creativity and enthusiasm, resulting in a powerful and focused production that held its audience throughout.”

JONATHAN BONNET,
PERFORMING ARTS



Danny Standing as 'Husband' and Marnie Pounds as 'Young woman' in *Machinal* performance.

Sports Awards 2026



Hills shines on the National sporting stage

A team of 54 Hills Road students proudly represented the East Region at the AoC National Finals at the University of Nottingham over the weekend of 18 April, competing alongside around 3,000 students from colleges across the country.

The students delivered a series of impressive performances across the weekend. Morgan Gall secured a silver medal in Women's Tennis, while the Women's Volleyball team battled their way to a silver medal finish. In Cross Country, Kalle Van Paridon's performance helped the East Region team claim another silver medal.

Elsewhere, the Cricket team finished sixth overall, while both Badminton and Men's Volleyball achieved fifth-place finishes, with the volleyball team also receiving a Sportsmanship Award nomination. The Mixed Hockey team recovered from a challenging opening day to record two victories on Sunday, alongside strong performances in Tennis and Table Tennis.

More importantly, Hills Road students were outstanding ambassadors for the College, demonstrating determination, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the event.



These opportunities are made possible through the generous support of our sponsors, whose contributions help fund team kits, coaching and equipment. We are grateful to the following companies for their support:

- Blues Property
- Hill
- Hollis
- Ingleton Wood
- WPA Benevolent Foundation
- Zephyr

Click or tap to find out how you can support Hills Road sport.



Award winners from across Hills Road's sports teams were recognised at the annual Sports Awards Evening, celebrating achievement, commitment and leadership throughout the 2025-26 season.

Held at the Hilton in Cambridge city centre, the event brought together students, staff and coaches for an evening of celebration, recognising individuals and teams who made outstanding contributions to sport at the College throughout the year.

See the list of winners at: hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/sport-awards-2026



12 SOCIAL ACTION WEEK

Over £40,000 raised during Social Action Week

On 18-22 May, Year 12 students raised an outstanding £40,034 (total at the time of writing) during Social Action Week 2026, supporting an impressively wide range of charities and community causes.

Social Action Week challenges students to design and deliver projects linked to causes they are passionate about. Working in teams, they spent the week planning campaigns, organising fundraising activities and engaging with their chosen charities, while developing valuable skills in leadership, teamwork, communication and problem-solving.

This year's fundraising projects showcased remarkable creativity and commitment, ranging from sponsored walks and bake sales to a quiz in the hall and fun social media challenges – all aimed at making a positive impact beyond the College community.



The week concluded with student presentations, where teams reflected on their achievements and the lessons they had learned throughout the process. Representatives from event sponsors PEM and supporters Unloc attended the presentations and commended students on their professionalism, creativity and dedication.

Congratulations to all students involved on another successful and inspiring week of fundraising!



“

“Our students have made a meaningful difference to individuals, communities and the wider world – they are true agents of change.”

SARA MACFARLANE,
HEAD OF ENRICHMENT

