The newsletter for RLS alumni



The Royal Latin School - Latin Life

Winter 2024, Issue 22

Inside Latin Life



Ian Chislett's first term



Hello from Alex O'Donnell



Old Latins back in school



Interview with an Old Latin member of staff



Remembering Old Latins



Welcome to the 22nd edition of Latin Life

As I reflect on my first term as Headteacher of the Royal Latin School, I am filled with a deep sense of privilege and gratitude. Becoming part of a school with such a rich history, strong traditions, and vibrant sense of community has been an extraordinary experience. It has been wonderful getting to know our talented staff, enthusiastic students, supportive parents, and even meeting a few Old Latins along the way.

This term has been a whirlwind of activity and inspiration. One of the highlights has been the chance to cheer on our students at various sports fixtures, even stepping in to referee some fiercely contested senior House football matches - an experience I won't soon forget! Music has also played a central role in our school life, with Friday lunchtime concerts showcasing the incredible dedication and talent of our musicians.

Our Enrichment Day was another standout moment, offering a dazzling array of activities designed to engage and inspire. Students threw themselves into making bird boxes, learning sign language, Italian cooking, paintballing, escape rooms, debating, futsal, and even putting on a fashion show. These dynamic challenges not only fostered creativity and teamwork but also encouraged a healthy dose of House spirit and personal growth.

Perhaps the most moving moment of the term was our whole school Remembrance Service, which brought us together as a community to honour the courage and sacrifices of those who served, reflecting on values such as democracy, liberty, and tolerance. With poignant readings, heartfelt poems, and the 'Last Post' leading into a profound silence, it was a deeply moving moment for all. Now, as we look forward to the Christmas season, I am reminded of the joy and warmth that this time of year brings. The upcoming Christmas Carol Concert promises to be a wonderful celebration of music, community, and the festive spirit.

As this memorable first term comes to a close, I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received. The Royal Latin is a special place, and I am immensely proud to be part of its ongoing journey.

To all Old Latins, please know you are always welcome back at RLS. As the saying goes, 'Once a Latin, always a Latin.' I look forward to meeting many more of you in the future.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

tweet

lan Chislett, Headteacher

The newsletter for RLS alumni



A gallery of Ian Chislett's first term

Our new headteacher has had a busy first term, particularly enjoying the endeavours of our students in all aspects of Latin life . . .



Ian Chislett, Ian Gould, and Bobby WIcks congratulating the U14 boys rugby team on their recent win against Stowe



Students from across the school participated in the first lunchtime concert of the year in September



Year 8 Christmas Fair



The 19 student finalists of the RLS Piano Competition 2024





Youth STEMM Award - students across year groups have achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold awards through extracurricular activities in science, technology, engineering, maths, and medicine

On Friday 22nd November, the school welcomed Callum Anderson, MP for Buckingham and Bletchley, for the afternoon. Following a tour with the Head Boy and Head Girl (pictured below) he met with a selection of student leaders to learn about the student leadership experience at RLS. These sixth-form students had the opportunity to learn about Mr Anderson's job and the political structure of Parliament, and were also able to ask their MP questions about current affairs. Mr Anderson reported that the students gave him a 'thorough grilling!'



lan Chislett and Callum Anderson MP, with Head Girl Chloe and Head Boy Bertie

Hello from Alex O'Donnell, our new Director of Development



Hello and welcome to the Winter edition of *Latin Life*. I'm Alex O'Donnell, the new Director of Development and, as I write, there are only two weeks left of my first term at the school. It's been a whirlwind of learning, meeting people and getting my head around Google Workplace. The highlight of my first term has been organising the first stand-alone Extraordinary People Awards. All schools should be proud of and support the communities they are part of. This event was a wonderful occasion to celebrate some inspirational individuals who enrich the community with their time and energy. You can read more about the EPA's on page 6.

I'm sure you don't want to read my CV so here's the elevator version. Prior to working in school development I spent most of my career working in London for Condé Publications. More recently I worked in fundraising in the Arts Sector at Longborough Festival Opera and at a local hospice at home charity. I'm married and have 2 children, aged 21 and 19. I love football, cooking and drifting off to sleep listening to podcasts.

I feel honored to be part of the Royal Latin community that has so much to be proud of: its history, staff, students, impressive campus and last but not least, the alumni who still hold the school so dear.

When I came for my interview I was incredibly nervous, not because I didn't feel I could do the job, but I was very aware of the amazing job my predecessor, Jo Ballantine had done. A few years ago, I met Jo as I embarked on my first job in the sector, setting up a development office at Chipping Campden School in Gloucestershire. The school wanted to connect with its alumni and build a Performing Arts Centre. I turned to Jo for advice on the latter and could not have chosen a better mentor. I spent 5 years working in Campden (the p is very important), where I still live and enjoy the benefits of The Cidermill Theatre - the project I tirelessly worked on. Capital campaigns to build new facilities are exciting and daunting in equal measure. The 600 Campaign has one phase left, and the plans to build an Arts Centre is the most ambitious and exciting (in my view). It's too early to share much information as I am still working on plans. I would really like to hear from any alumni who would be willing to share their experience/memories of the arts whilst at RLS and/or work or have connections in the arts/creative sector. Please drop me a line as I'd love to hear from you aodonnell@royallatin.org

I loved my school days (which I know is sadly not the case for everyone) and have some great friendships from my time at school in Solihull, near to where I grew up. I value enormously the hard work my old school puts into connecting with their alumni and would love your thoughts and ideas on how we can evolve with our alumni engagement. For a school that is over 600 years old, we are still learning and adapting and I would value your feedback and advice. Thank you and look forward to hopefully meeting many of you in the near future.

Wishing you a very happy 2025.





Remembrance Service 2024

On Friday 9th November, the Royal Latin community came together once more to mark Remembrance Day - a time to honour those who have served in conflicts around the world. Students, staff and distinguished guests, gathered in the school grounds to remember the 51 Old Latins who gave their lives in the two World Wars. We also remembered all the victims of war, soldiers and civilians, past and present.

The service featured a reading of the RLS Roll of Honour, alongside the poem 'In Flanders Fields' and the RLS student promise:

'So that we can enjoy freedom today, we honour those who fought for our country and those who died. John Maxwell Edmonds wrote the famous words after World War I, "When you go home, tell them of us and say, For their tomorrow, we gave our today" and on behalf of the students and staff of the Royal Latin School we thank those who fought and died for us. We promise that we will remember them forever.'



The school gathered for the service, with Ian Chislett speaking



Students from across the school participated in the service; the Head Boy and Head Girl lay poppy wreaths, we were joined by student cadets who represented the army, navy and the air force, and other students gave readings or performed music. Following a stirring rendition of 'The Last Post' performed by students Daniel, Freya, and Lucas with their teacher Ms Moisey, the staff and student Chamber Choir, under the direction of Mrs Ridout, sang Purcell's 'Thou knowest, Lord.'

Just before 11 a.m. staff, students, and guests joined in a solemn period of silence, standing united in reflection with the enduring words, 'We will remember them.'

With our school's 600 year history, at the Royal Latin we understand deeply the importance of remembering our past and the lessons it imparts. As one of the country's oldest schools, we are privileged to be part of a long legacy that holds respect for the past at its heart. It is essential that each new generation remembers the sacrifices of those before us, ensuring that the lessons of history guide our future actions.



Students Daniel, Freya, and Lucas with Mrs Moisey



Extraordinary People Awards



lan Chislett, Anja Schaefer, and the winners of the Extraordinary People Awards

As some of you may recall, the 600th anniversary of our school and close relationship with Buckingham provided an opportunity to reflect on our values and responsibilities and how to give back to the community we have been part of for so long.

A group of staff, students, parents and Old Latins helped to create the 2023 Charter - a set of goals and pledges focusing on four pillars - Community, Heritage, Planet and Future. One of the key ways in which we aim to support our community is by recognising those who selflessly contribute so much to the lives of those who live in the Buckingham area through the Extraordinary People Awards.

The first awards were held in 2023 as part of the 600th anniversary celebrations. The event in October 2024 was our first stand-alone celebration of our worthy winners who represented the school virtues of Integrity, Resilience, Respect, Courage and Compassion. One of the winners was an Old Latin, Alex Penny (1992-1995). Alex, alongside his wife, Laura, established Buckingham Park Run in 2014 and the Buckingham half marathon in 2017. They have raised thousands for local charities through their running endeavours. Some of you may remember Alex's father, Terry

Penny, a former Head of Science who worked at the school from 1978-1998.

We were delighted to welcome Buckingham Mayor, Anja Schaefer to present the awards. Our students also raised over £1,700 via a dedicated non-uniform day which was shared equally between our winners' chosen charities.

Please look out on the school website early 2025 for nominations for the 2025 awards.



lan Chislett and Anja Schaefer (left) with Alex and Laura Penny



Aspirations Day

Aspirations Day, held in July, took place during the school day, enabling access to all students from Year 7 to Year 12.

Over 70 organisations were represented, showcasing a diverse range of career and apprenticeship opportunities. The event gave our students an up-close look at different career paths, helping to connect what they are learning in school to the real world. It's also a great opportunity to network with employers. Rotherfield was buzzing all day with inquisitive students and we were delighted to see so many Old Latins taking part.

'Reconnecting with old teachers was nostalgic and heartwarming. Special thanks to Jane Comben, for hosting me on the day and the wonderful tour – amazing to see how much the school has evolved.

Events like these remind me of the importance of mentorship. Grateful for the opportunity to give back and inspire the next generation!'

Niraj Kholsa, Class of 2018

'It was great to discuss with pupils from across the age groups their aspirations for life as well as for their working careers and why thinking about life aspirations is as important as their career aspirations. It was challenging and a lot of fun!'

Trevor Saving, Class of 1974



Niraj Kholsa at his stand on Aspirations Day

If you are interested in supporting our students and getting involved in Aspirations Day 2025, please get in touch:

latinlife@royallatin.org



Students from across the school had the opportunity to find out about a wide range of careers by speaking to our guests



Old Latins Back in School

Old Latin Medics supporting RLS MedSoc

Thank you to the Old Latin medics who have recently given up their time to support our aspiring medics in Sixth Form.

Zack Ferguson (Class of 2008)

Dr Zack Ferguson, who is now a Speciality Registrar in Acute Internal Medicine, visited in November. He gave a presentation about his career and led an interview preparation workshop for Year 13s. Thank you Zack for your time and words of wisdom.



We were joined by Abi Moore in October, who talked students through her top tips for interview preparation. Abi is now in her second year at The University of Sheffield studying Medicine.



In September, Akshita Sapra joined MedSoc students virtually to discuss finalising their applications and applying to suitable universities to maximise success. We wish Akshita all the best for her first year studying Medicine at Imperial College London.





We are also very grateful to the 30+ alumni currently giving their time to do mock interviews with sixth-formers to help them prepare for university admissions. If you are a medic, vet, or dentist and would like to get involved and provide support to our MedSoc students, please contact Sally Kay at skay@royallatin.org.

Lillingstone Lecture by an Old Latin

On Wednesday 4th December, we welcomed Professor Patrick Lewis, who attended RLS in the 1990s. He delivered an excellent lecture in the Discovery Centre, as part of the Lillingstone Lecture series, entitled 'Scraping Sheep, Mad Cows, and Zombie Deer: Prion Diseases in the 21st Century'.

Patrick now works at the Royal Veterinary College, and has been investigating the causes of neurodegeneration for two decades. His major research interest is understanding how mutations associated with neurodegenerative diseases alter the way brain cells work, causing them to die.





Archive Events

This term we have held two Archive pop-ins. In September we welcomed back Barbara (Bethanne) Brummell (née Chapman) and Cheryl Wistow (née Hankin) who both boarded. They had some funny tales to tell of their days as boarders in Rotherfield, and Cheryl informed us that she met her husband at RLS.

'Here we are 54 years later, Barbara Chapman and Cheryl Hankin! It was so much fun wandering around the girls boarding house and remembering our time together there. The remodelling has changed it so much but we could still identify which was our room and see where we slept. The memories flooded back. I met my husband Richard Wistow at RLS in 1970 and we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary next March. It all just seems like yesterday...'

On 11th December we hosted our Winter Archive pop-in and welcomed back alumni from the 1960s, 70s and 80s. It was interesting to hear their discussion on how the school had evolved over the various decades and which teachers really stuck in their memories.

Save the date:
Wednesday 7th May 2025
for our annual Archive Open Day





ROTHERFIELD 6th Form Centre

From L-R: Sarah Crompton (Class of 1983), Linda Seymour (née Holmes, Class of 1968), Steve Holmes (Class of 1974) and Fred Filer (Class of 1963)

Alumni News

Alice Nuttall (Class of 2004)





Alice Nuttall now, and when she was a Royal Latin student

'I'm a big fan of the zombie genre, but started thinking about what it would be like if zombies were a normal part of everyday life.'



Congratulations to Alice Nuttall on the publication of her debut novel *The Zombie Project*, to be published January 2025 by Chicken House. Described as 'hugely original' and 'action-packed,' this book is aimed at 'tween' readers and features, 'environmental themes packaged alongside age-appropriate horror and scares.'

'I had some really inspirational teachers at RLS. The ones that really stand out were Mr Green (who was my first form tutor at RLS and also taught me History) and Mr Aldridge, who taught me English.'

In addition to *The Zombie Project*, Alice writes webcomics with co-creator and illustrator Emily Brady.

Old Latins Back as Staff Members

An interview with Bobby Wicks (Class of 2009)



How would you describe your time at the school in general? What was the school like when you were a student?

Being a student at RLS feels like a lifetime ago now, especially having come back to the school as a Teacher. I remember finding the first couple of years at RLS challenging, it was a big change from primary school and I struggled to keep up at times. That being said, I enjoyed my time at RLS more and more the longer I was there and now feel incredibly grateful to have had the fortune of attending a school that provided me with so many great opportunities. Some elements of the school are very different and some are much the same.

What have you done since you left school?

After leaving school I went to Loughborough University to study Sports Technology. It was during my final year of university that I decided that I wanted to be involved in sport on a day-to-day basis and subsequently pursued a career as a PE teacher. I am also very passionate about health and fitness and have worked extensively within the fitness industry since leaving school. Coming back to RLS to teach PE and work within the fantastic new fitness suite was the perfect opportunity for me and one which I have thoroughly enjoyed.

When did you start working here? What is your role at the school?

I started working at RLS in January 2023.

I teach PE and manage VIVA - the new fitness suite which is used by students during the day and is open to the public in the evening and at weekends.

What is it like being back as a member of staff?

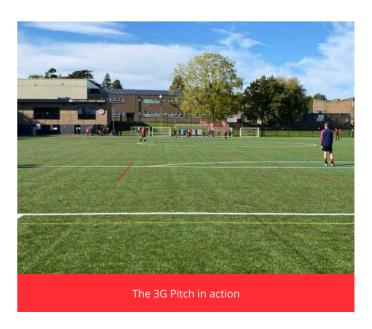
In all honesty it felt a little strange at first, but I absolutely love it - the students and staff at RLS are an absolute pleasure to work with.

Cardio or weights?

Both.

What is it like teaching with the new sports facilities?

The facilities are incredible, especially compared to what they were like in 'my day'. The 3G pitch is a game changer and the standard of football that the boys and girls play now is far superior to the quality of football played on those muddy grass pitches that I can remember 15-20 years ago!





'It's essential that, as a society, we help all young people to find a form of exercise which they can enjoy doing on a regular basis with their peers'

How do these new facilities positively impact your students?

The students absolutely love the new sports facilities. The opportunity that the new facilities have provided our students is enormous and I can think of countless students who have benefited in terms of their physical development, but also grown in confidence too.

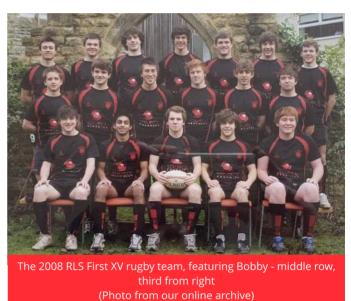


Why is participation in sport so important for young people?

I could spend a few hours answering this question but I will keep it succinct. I don't necessarily believe that 'sports' participation is the most important thing for young people. However I do believe that regular exercise is by far the most powerful tool for leading a happy and healthy life. I believe that the benefits of exercising with other people are absolutely huge, whether that is in a sports team or not. That's why it's essential that, as a society, we help all young people to find a form of exercise which they can enjoy doing on a regular basis with their peers.

Did any teachers at the Latin make a particular impression on you when you were a student?

I have great memories of many teachers, but particularly the PE staff who coached me or taught me exam PE; Mr Izzard, Mr Leyland, Mr Farrell, Mr Porteous and Miss Payne. It sounds like a cliche but they were a big inspiration to me and, without doubt, one of the most significant reasons for my decision to pursue a career as a PE teacher.

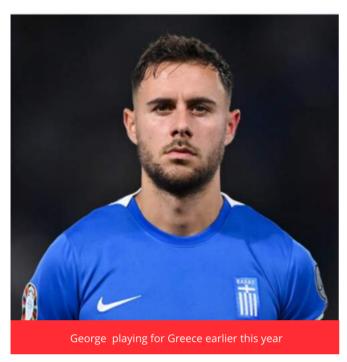


Do you have any memories from your time at the school you'd like to share?

Almost all of my best memories are related to sport . . . I remember my first ever rugby training session with Mr Izzard, having absolutely no idea what I was doing. Going on to reach the semi finals of the National Vase a few years later was a fantastic journey that has provided plenty of great memories. I was also lucky to be the only left footed player in our football team which, on occasion, secured me a role at left midfield. I remember scoring one goal for the school from outside the box - it was a terrible cross that dribbled into the bottom corner. I also have memories of school trips and events such as Lakeside, rugby tour, ski trip, Mr Latin and a lot of 'estimation whist' in Year 13. I won't go into detail about these slightly more embarrassing memories, but I am sure there are a few alumni from the Class of 2009 that will remember too!

Old Latins Remembered

George Baldock (Class of 2011)



Everyone at the Royal Latin was shocked and deeply saddened to hear about the sudden passing of George Baldock, age 31, in October this year. George's mother, Jacquie Baldock, served as Deputy Headteacher at the Royal Latin from 1993 until 2018 and when he started at the Royal Latin in 2004 George was following in the footsteps of his older brothers, Old Latins James and Sam. The Baldock family has been an integral part of both our school and the wider Buckingham community for many years.

George was an exceptional athlete who pursued a remarkable football career, playing for top-flight clubs such





as Sheffield United and Panathinaikos. George started his career with local team, MK Dons, as well as spells on loan to several other teams. In recent years proudly represented the Greek national team.

Many staff and former students remember George fondly, not for his talent on the field, but for his character and dedication as an exceptionally kind-hearted student. His achievements as a professional footballer brought a sense of pride to all who knew him, and his loss is felt deeply within our community.

Neel Gorasia (Class of 2002)

It is with sadness that we report on the passing of Neel Gorasia in November 2024, aged 40. Neel has a six-year-old son with his spouse, who is also expecting their second child. Throughout his life, Neel always spoke proudly of how he enjoyed his time and education at the Royal Latin School. After leaving school, Neel went on to major in History and Economics at the University of Bristol and would become a Senior Manager in KPMG, specialising in tax and working in their Global Mobility Services department. He worked at KPMG's highly prestigious branch in Canary Wharf, London.

Neel was someone who brought warmth, humour, and kindness into the many lives he touched. We send our condolences to Neel's family and friends.



Roy Maycock, Biology teacher from 1958-1985



Roy Maycock (front right) chats to former students at Archive Day in 2019

We are sad to report that former Royal Latin Biology teacher, Roy Maycock, passed away in November this year. Roy taught at the Latin for from 1958-1985 and never lost touch with the school.

Roy joined the Royal Latin in 1958, when the school occupied the former site at what is now George Grenville Academy. He was responsible for introducing A-level Biology (and later Zoology and Botany), as he recalled in Issue 6 of *Latin Life*:

'Two students took on the task of completing the course in just one year but, at the end of the first tem, one left! The one remaining passed with flying colours in 1959.'

Science facilities in the 1950s were a far cry from today's Disovery Centre, as Roy recounted,

'There were just two laboratories – one for all of Chemistry (and, very occasionally, Biology), the other for Physics and Biology.

Sharing meant the Sixth Form theory lessons (at least for Biology) were held in small rooms in Grenville House (now demolished and replaced by modern houses) – 'that's where I learned to write upside-down so that students could copy the technical terms. There was no room for a blackboard!'

Outside of the Science department, Roy also directed many school productions, including the legendary Gilbert & Sullivan opera productions of the 1960s, which were a real passion of his in and outside school.

After his retirement Roy remained in close contact with the school, attending many school reunions and Archive Days, including one notable visit to school in 2017, where he was reunited with his first A-level student, Pat Smith (née Viccars).

Roy also took a keen interest in the development of the new science block, the Discovery Centre, where he also became a regular attendee at the Lillingstone Lecture Series of community science talks when they started in 2015.

Additionally, Roy was one of the key Old Latin volunteers for the 'Living Memory' project when the school archive was first formally established in 2012. Roy really was the embodiment of the phrase 'Once a Latin, always a Latin'.

We offer condolences to all of Roy's family and friends, and know that he was well respected, as an excellent teacher, by students and staff alike and will be fondly remembered by those who knew him.



Joanna Macklin (née Bryant, Class of 1963)

We were sorry to hear the sad news from Robin Bryant (Class of 1960) that his sister, Joanna Macklin, passed away in November 2024.

After leaving school, Joanna went on to become a French teacher and lecturer and continued to meet up with her friends from RLS annually. Joanna was a great supporter of the school and is remembered fondly by all who knew her at the Latin. She generously took part in the 'Inspiration Bank' project, a few years ago, to share her wisdom with current students. You can read her thoughts on life and school on the school website - royallatin.org. Just search for 'Inspiration Bank'.

We offer condolences to Joanna's family and friends.

From Stewart Walker (Class of 1975)

Calling the Class of 1975 - 50th Reunion - 14th June 2025



The menu from the very first '75 Club reunion in Buckingham

Want to see more memories from 1975?

Check out the SDS Archive from the menu on RLS Connect.

If you search "1975" you should find the 1975 school magazine, complete with photos, news, art, and creative writing from that year.



A photo of the 1974-75 prefects from the 1975 school magazine

Thank you to Stewart Walker from the Class of 1975 for contacting us about the planned reunion of the 1975 leavers year group to take place on **Saturday 14th June 2025**, with a possible trip to the Royal Latin on **Sunday 15th June**. The '75 Club' held its first reunion at The Old Market Place on 23rd January 1975 with a number of that cohort staying in regular contact since then. **Thank you to Stewart for supplying the menu from the very first reunion dinner nearly 50 years ago!**

If you are from the Class of 1975 and have lost touch with your school friends and would be interested in joining the 50th anniversary reunion, please contact us at **latinlife@royallatin.org** and we'll put you in touch with Stewart and the other organisers.

Or, you can contact Stewart directly through **RLS Connect** if you're a registered member.

Not from the Class of 1975 but thinking of organising a reunion for your year group?

Please feel free to contact us - we'd love to support you with getting the old gang back together and to welcome you back into school for a trip down memory lane.

Contact us at latinlife@royallatin.org



Nearly 1,500 Old Latins are now on RLS Connect!



After launching our new private online community for Old Latins for our 600th anniversary year, the platform has gone from strength to strength and we now have nearly 1,500 members who have signed up to have online profiles.

It's quick and easy to register, and once you have you can:

Build your profile (adding a photo, interests, career path) **Invite others** to join too

Find, message & connect with your old school friends, teachers, siblings, & staff

Read about upcoming events for Old Latins and book places at Reunion Days and special 600th Anniversary celebrations

Browse our growing digital archive and search for yourself or your friends in our digitised material

Join a Group and reconnect or meet other Latins that have similar interests to you, careers, or classmates from the same decade

Share information about your career, a new venture, a job opportunity you have got or anything exciting you think would be of interest to other Latins

Help give back to your old school with careers advice & mentoring for current students

Opt to receive regular bulletins from the Development team, with news relevant to alumni

Join today, and let's see if we can get to 2,000 members in 2024/25!

rlsconnect.royallatin.org



Have you visited our online shop yet?

Visit royallatin.org/shop to view our full of range of merchandise, including our 600th anniversary items

(Orders placed now will be posted in January)



Get in Touch!

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2024/25 Calendar

(any updates will be published on RLS Connect)

Wednesday 12th February

Sports Campus Sport Science lecture on ultra processed foods (title TBC) by Marion Hetherington

Wednesday 26th February

Lillingstone Lecture: 'Antibiotics in crisis: can we stop the spread of bacterial resistance' by clinical scientist and Old Latin, Kip Heath

Wednesday 26th March

Lillingstone Lecture: 'The solar system – from the Sun to Pluto' by Ross Hockham of UK Astronomy

Wednesday 7th May

Annual Archive Open Day

Thursday 8th May

A level Art Open Studio

Friday 20th June

Founders' Day & Sports Day

A new way to connect:

We have recently launched an Instagram account! You can now keep up to date with your old school and alumni news by following us there:

@rlsoldlatins





Stay in touch:





Facebook.com/OldLatins



X (Twitter) @RLSAlumni

It's your Latin Life . . .



We rely on your contributions to shape this magazine - so please get in touch to share ideas for articles or let us know what you would like to see included in *Latin Life*.

We'd particularly like to be able to share your news – whether relating to career, family, leisure, travel or voluntary work – with other Old Latins, so get your thinking caps on and email us at:

latinlife@royallatin.org

