

Lost Voices Heard

Christ's Hospital – Fri 30th May 2025

Your Invitation

We, as Old Blues, would like to invite you to join us in person (or partly on Zoom) on Friday 30 May 2025, 10am to 5pm, at Christ's Hospital for an event we are carefully developing.

Over the last three years we have been working towards this event, curated by a group of survivors, and hosted by the school – as the culmination of seven years of liaison between CH and Old Blues and a Listening Exercise led by our independent mediator, Lia Shimada –.

Three key communities are being invited:

- victims/survivors of sexual abuse from Hertford and Horsham;
- family members of deceased victims;
- and invited guests who may include the wider CH community or those involved in the seven-year Reconciliation process.

While we cannot know the individual impact of sharing the intention of this event, it is through this event that we hope to address the following requests:

- to offer an acknowledgment of past abuse suffered by some pupils who attended CH;
- to provide a basis of understanding between generations, including families of those victims who have since died;
- to offer a form of Reconciliation for those victims of abuse at the school, with the school;
- to allow 'ghosts' of experiences to be faced including, for some, the first visit to the school after decades avoiding revisiting the past.
- And through all this to continue the development of a healing community.

Each guest will be able to choose from a range of options. The day will include the opening of a newly planted orchard, reflections in the Theatre and a short service in the Chapel. We hope to offer the opportunity to visit the Museum, the Art School and the Library. Big School, the Court Room, Chapel and Dining Hall will all be open. We will gather from 10am for coffee and meeting friends old and new. Lunch will be provided. Head Teacher Simon Reid and Old Blue Robert Totterdell will both give short talks. We will complete the formal programme at 5pm.

If you might wish to attend, or connect on Zoom, please fill in the form. The form is being held by Old Blue Chris Grady to maximize safeguarding so your full name is required, though you will be able to attend with first name only or anonymously.

<https://forms.gle/ABmsnjSsrP3DeQ5J9> We ask you to help us and get all responses back by 23rd April. This will give us time to come back to you concerning catering and logistics. Thank you. Please do not consider attending 'on the day' without being on the invitation/guest list, for everyone's conscious peace of mind.

With your help, this day will be as safe, effective, and calm as possible, and each of us will be able to take responsibility for our own well-being. Everyone should have time, for their own journey, for quiet time, and for manageable engagement with others. The school's current safeguarding practice will be presented and colleagues from the independent charity Benevolent Society of Blues (BSB), who already offer support to victims, will be available on the day.

With all good wishes
Chris Grady / MaB LaA 69-76
Email Chris@chrisgrady.org

On behalf of
Patricia Dowling (Combe) / 7s BaA 82-90,
Robert Totterdell / MaA MidA 69-76 and
Louisa Lockwood / 4s BaA 81-88

And supported at CH by Head Teacher Simon Reid and Business Manager Jacqui Duggan.

APPENDICES

LINK to a personal encouragement to consider joining us from Trish containing aspects of her own experiences of abuse.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nE_MLaD6wxvR_koxy2VIBHhKEoC2gVWe/view?usp=sharing

LINK to the Statement of Acknowledgment, 22 February 2023 <https://www.christs-hospital.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Acknowledgement-Statement-.pdf>

LINK to BSB <https://bluessupportingblues.com/looking-for-help/>

LINK to other help <https://www.christs-hospital.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Safeguarding-and-support-information.pdf>

Rob's Reflection

When we began preparing the event following suggestions we had from many survivors, Rob wrote his very personal reason for moving this forward:

The concept behind this event is to 'draw a line in the sand' to provide a 'form of closure' for those from 1949 to 2001 – this is the last date covered by evidence in the six convicted cases – which is not to diminish or to resolve abuse, of any sort, from the period after 2001. But it is in hope of achieving some reconciliation with the past.

This event is not to replace the 'Gatherings', it is to compliment them – it is called the Lost Voices for a reason. It is about being heard not just in a group of people with similar issues; it is about being heard by CH and a wider community. It is, I guess, what I have tried to achieve, being understood and heard. But it is also about reconciliation with both CH and Ghosts of the past. It is about a group of people, totally disparate, that can come together and find their own strengths and well-being going forward. I guess it is about love and caring which I have carried on my shoulders for so long. A bringing together of different generations and sexes.

By one 'big day' it makes the school stand up; face up; and acknowledge their short comings even more than the Statement. The issues are brought back to CH and not held in a separate and uninvolved, neutral location. The school recognizes and we all try to Reconcile.

Chris Grady adds, 'Many of us, including Rob, believe whole-heartedly in the value of the kind of education and offer which the charity of Christ's Hospital can give current and future generations. This event is not intended to reopen unhelpful interest in the past, or cause any impact on present pupils or future opportunities. It will give us all a chance to see how lessons from the past, and a change in the operation of the school in so many ways, makes this a safer environment now than was available to us in previous years.'