

## Barry Coxon

Former Head Boy Barry Coxon (Ridley, 1976-83) died following a massive heart attack on Wednesday 5th October 2011. Our sympathies go out to his family and especially to his brother Paul, who also attended King Edward's.

The following obituary is reproduced from the KES Facebook group, with kind permission from its author, Paul Higgins:

*"My mind has been swimming with Barry Coxon recollections for the last two days, so I hope you don't mind if I share a few of them with you.*

*It dawned on me yesterday that Barry was this only person with whom I shared a house for my entire seven years at KES (QMH and Ridley). We had some strong characters in our year, but it was apparent from the early days of our 1st form that Barry was a towering presence, both literally and metaphorically. In terms of intelligence, sporting prowess, razor sharp wit, self-confidence and sheer strength of personality you couldn't really compete with Barry, so you just instinctively followed him. As such he was a born leader, always destined to be Head Boy, a role in which he predictably excelled when his time came.*

*Academically Barry was always top or near the top of the class. But he was clever in other ways too. He always seemed so much more mature, observant, knowledge, and insightful than the rest of us and wise beyond his years. He had a keen eye for idiosyncrasies and mannerisms, which allied to his wicked sense of humour, made him a prodigious source of nicknames and witticisms. He was never dull to be around even if his humour could be a bit wounding at times. Moreover, he had a great sense of fun and subsequently got up to his fair share of mischief, but he was always very shrewd about it, with the result that he seldom got caught.*

*I will also remember Barry as a very gifted sportsman. In the 1st XI football squad we used to laugh about how many times Bob Boyd would say "Barry Coxon covered every blade of grass on that pitch today". Yet, as Bob's well-worn cliché suggested, Barry was indeed a selfless hard working player, who read and understood the game very well and was a great mentor to less talented players like me. As a cricketer he was a genuine all-rounder, but I particularly remember his fast bowling. He had this beautiful, fluid, technically correct bowling action and delivered the ball with a degree of pace, control and accuracy that I could only dream about emulating.*

*In the years after we left school, Barry was always very diligent about keeping up with the test of us. Whenever you dropped him a line you would always receive a prompt and fulsome reply and his visits to London from South Africa were invariably a catalyst for a school reunion and a lot of laughs. I last saw Barry 6 years ago at David Singer's wedding and while I know that many members of this group were a lot closer to Barry at various stages of your lives*

*than I ever was, I can honestly say that I admired and respected him as much as any person I have ever met. He was that special.*

*A few months ago Barry said on this group "I led a charmed life at school, but it has subsequently caught up with me". Those words seem tragically prophetic now. I also find it a particularly cruel irony that the two most talented athletes in my year, John Murumba and Barry Coxon, both left us at such a young age because their seemingly invincible bodies failed them. It is a sobering lesson in mortality for the rest of us.*

*So let us all make sure that we make the most of what time we have left and continue to cherish our precious little Old Wits Diaspora, although it will of course never be quite the same again without Barry."*