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Conference & common room

The magazine for leading
independent schools

A large, vibrant green leaf with prominent veins serves as the background for the lower half of the cover. A black silhouette of a lizard or gecko is positioned on the right side of the leaf, facing right. The leaf has several small, circular holes, suggesting it has been eaten by an insect.

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issues

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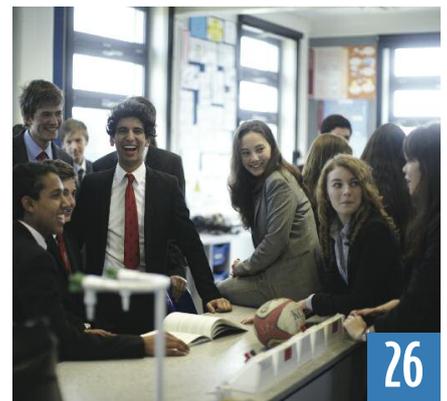
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Photograph by Stephen Coyne, who writes on page 53.



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One of the great false alarms of recent years was the Cosmic Computer Catastrophe of the Millennium. Although Y2K failed to bring our virtual world to a silent halt, the threat was entirely of our own making, as computers would smugly remind us, were we to programme them to do so.

Just as doctors point out that if we drink and smoke, fail to take exercise or eat our greens, we will reduce our life expectancy, so historians or social scientists could point out that the way we behaved in the 20th century has probably made 'more for less' the tag line for the kind of life people may expect to lead in the 21st. We are our own worst enemies.

In 1900 Britons might have been forgiven for thinking that they ruled the world. In 2000 they might well have been wondering when the lords of the financial universe were going to foreclose on the small section of it they now occupied as tenants.

At the end of the First World War, they were assured by a Coalition leader that their sacrifices had preserved a world fit for heroes to live in, provided they could survive the Spanish Flu. At the end of the Second World War, the British electorate rejected their inspirational war leader and the politics of the Right and Centre and opted instead for a Labour government led by a taciturn Old Haileyburian whose administration delivered a transformative social programme, the largely beneficial consequences of which are with us to this day.

But, like an ailing West End show, the billboards prepare us for the last few performances of the Welfare State and the South Bank's 60th anniversary celebration of The Festival of Britain calls to mind the closing words of Larkin's poem *MCMXIV* – 'Never such innocence again'.

The horrors of the 20th century are deemed to be suitable material for schoolchildren because they are 'history' and, however ghastly, there are, it is thought, lessons to be learned from them. These young people are now, however, exposed to equally graphic horrors in the form of 'news' on the television, which comes unrefined, save by editors anxious to make as deep and rapid an impact as they can on viewers.

In this mode, television is the enemy within, since its worldwide images are conveyed to us in a domestic setting, terrorist bombs brought direct to your sitting room. The default image of the London bombings of 7th July, 2005, is the ruined shell of the bus, the only bombsite above ground and, therefore, the only one that can give a clear visual message. Even that is now shorn of some of its impact by its sheer familiarity.

As teachers and parents we would hope that children have been taught how to have an educated response to 'news' just as they have been for 'history'. That is part of the thinking behind *The Day* and Miranda Green writes about how we can help our anxious teenagers navigate the 'news storm'.

History remains important, not least because some of it is unravelling before our eyes and some of it is coming back to bite us. The Welfare



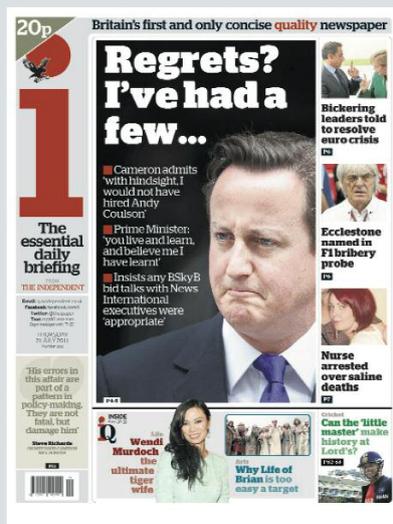
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State is no longer affordable, given the bi-partisan reluctance of governments to raise direct taxes because they believe, probably rightly, that such a policy would destroy them at the polls.

The longer life expectancy the National Health created means that pensions are massive thunderclouds plainly visible to all on the financial horizon, of immense and proper concern to those in work, but unlikely to be worrying our pupils over much.

On the other hand, although those now at school and university have never known a world without computers, they have been brought up to worry about climate change, their carbon footprint and the need to eat their 'five a day'.

Sustainability is the central theme of this issue of *Conference & Common Room* and colleagues report on 'green' buildings, energy-saving initiatives, recycling and re-education. We are, in all probability, preaching these sermons to the converted, but there are other aspects of modern school life where there is, essentially, no consensus.

It is a great advantage to have grown up before Facebook was invented, since the temptation to join in is fairly easily resisted. But, like Pinocchio's Pleasure Island, the prospect of unlimited virtual society is beguiling and, in terms of the welfare of children, there is just as clear a need to warn of the dangers of the internet as there is to question the watering down of vetting and barring procedures.

One of the great symbols of Britain's Imperial Age was the Public School. The image of ivy-clad, beating-driven finishing schools for the stoical and stiff upper-lipped is as false as the idea that Britain was really Top Nation in 1900. In fact, independent schools have always been flexible and protean, reinventing themselves at need, reviving from apparently terminal illnesses at will and surviving political, economic and cultural challenges with apparent ease. Independent schools are remarkably successful businesses.

They figure significantly in the country's invisible earnings, they achieve outstanding exam results and inspection reports, they are highly regarded in other countries and they retain a kudos that is transferred to their pupils and their former students. Today they face a truly life-threatening challenge – not the recession but the Hutton report on public service pensions. If independent school teachers are excluded from the Teachers' Pension Scheme, the impact on their schools will be, in a word, asteroidal. Ian Power has his eye glued to the telescope.

Nevertheless, we must take our cue from Nelson and concentrate on the job in hand, not the signals in the offing. What has happened to the lower sixth? Should more of our pupils be aiming at universities in North America? Are English universities making the most of the talent they receive? Do boys' and girls' schools require different management styles? How can you get kids to read? These are some of the questions the new Heads joining schools in September will need to answer.

It seems that, when it comes to poetry, there is war in heaven, or at least a struggle between Big-endians and Little-endians. What would Clifton's Sir Henry Newbolt have made of it? Sir Hubert Parry, Newbolt's musical *alter ego* and favourite composer of the Prince of Wales, would certainly have approved of Michael Stinton's approach to whole school music. Perhaps one day they will put on Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at Abingdon or an opera on Wolsey at Ipswich.

Such are the possibilities suggested by the talented contributors nurtured by Stephen Coyne, who finally emerges from behind his camera to give a glimpse of life on the *Conference & Common Room* editorial board, of which he has been a member for 15 years. His wise and modest chairmanship has been greatly valued, as has his eye for a poorly focused image or an over-long entry for Here & There. *C&CR* owes everything to its contributors and Stephen has been one of our most valued.

Maintaining John Lyon's trust

Kirsty Shanahan describes two major initiatives to cut waste and costs at Harrow

John Lyon left a substantial endowment for the school he founded in Harrow, which was granted its Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I in February 1572. He left even more money to see that the ten-mile stretch of road to London was properly kept up, a duty the school fulfilled for many years.

Good maintenance of the school's resources has therefore been fundamental at Harrow and the last three years have seen a concerted effort to cut down on waste and to make the school more efficient, in order to combat soaring energy costs and reduce Harrow's impact on the environment. A huge tree-planting project is just one initiative, but two others are much more hi-tech and are already making a difference.

Harrow has just opened its first new boarding house in 100 years. This is newsworthy in itself, at a time when the independent schools market is static or contracting, but what makes this new building really exciting is the technology incorporated in it.

Lyon's House benefits from a state-of-the-art heat pump system, which harnesses free energy from the ground. It also uses several other sustainable technologies, including a rainwater-harvesting system and solar panels.

The ground-source heat pump is based on 6.6km of pipe buried in trenches in fields on the hillside surrounding the building. The pipes carry glycol solution as a heat exchange medium and are laid in an array of 66 trenches, each 100m long. These are organised in groups of 11 loops, each with a flow and

return pipe, and are brought together in six sub-headers. The sub-headers, concealed beneath the ground surface, feed into the main header which routes the primary flow and return pipes to the building's plant room.

Neil Otter, operations director of Ecovision, the company that supplied the system, says, "The temperature of the ground is remarkably constant a few feet below the surface. In this area of the country, at a depth of one metre, it remains at a steady 10°C throughout the year, even in the depths of winter. This may not sound very warm, but when conditions above the surface fall below this temperature – even by a few degrees – it provides a substantial amount of free energy that we are able to tap into and harness."

The glycol solution circulating in the buried pipe absorbs heat from the surrounding earth, which warms the solution by a few degrees. This is then transferred via a high efficiency brazed plate heat exchanger to a refrigerant circuit in the heat pumps, which converts the energy released from the refrigerant into a useful form for heating the building.

The system is based on three Si377E Glen Dimplex heat pumps, each delivering up to 37kW. For every 1kW of electrical power consumed by the system, the heat pump delivers 4kW of energy which is used to heat pupils' rooms, kitchens and communal areas in the new building via low temperature radiators and fan coil units. This enables the school to cut

HERE & THERE

Success for Plymouth College's birdfeeder



Vince Cable buys an Ecofeeder from Managing Director, Michael Daniel.

Hot on the heels of claiming the England prize in the Young Person's Social Enterprise of the Year category, Plymouth College company Ecovation has taken the runner-up spot in the UK final of the Social Enterprise Awards.

Held as part of Voice 11 (the UK's biggest social enterprise event) at the O₂ Arena, Ecovation was competing against other enterprises from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Established by a team of inspiring sixth formers in September 2010, Ecovation builds and sells products to help the environment, including the Ecofeeder, a birdfeeder that turns household kitchen food waste into bird food to help reduce landfill.

Despite missing out on the top prize, Ecovation didn't come away empty-handed, selling 150 birdfeeders to a garden centre, signing a manufacturing deal with a company in Nottingham and securing £15,000 in funding. The company also sold an Ecofeeder to Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Ecovation has pledged to give away a percentage of profits to help improve the local and global environment. Beneficiaries will include the Wildlife Trust and Real Ideas Young People's Social Enterprise Start Up Fund. The team turned down an offer of private investment because they want to stay true to their values.



Nothing is wasted.

running costs by around 25 per cent a year compared with a conventional gas-powered heating system.

Although it would be fair to say that Harrow is steeped in tradition, it is also very forward-thinking as an institution, and keen to embrace the best new approaches and technology. It is especially fitting that Lyon's House, named after the school's visionary founder, should make use of state-of-the-art technology for harnessing sustainable energy and safeguarding the environment. It is felt that this is something he would very much approve of.

Another initiative which has achieved the two-fold objective of cutting waste going into landfill and of producing energy from a sustainable source, is taking place in the kitchens. Last year, Harrow recycled almost 50 tonnes of food waste from the off-cuts and plate scrapings of nearly 3000 meals a day into enough energy to power more than 300,000 light bulbs, becoming one of the first boarding schools to have a dedicated food waste recycling service. This method of producing energy has saved more than ten tonnes of CO₂ over the last year.

"Food waste recycling isn't confined to those with massive amounts of food waste such as retailers and food manufacturers," says Julia Tyler, domestic bursar at Harrow School. "As we've recycled more and more of our waste, organic waste was the last and possibly the biggest challenge.

"While we constantly look at reducing the amount of waste at the outset, the food by-product recycling company PDM has enabled us to make some significant environmental savings. The system has been easy to implement for our kitchen staff, which is an important consideration as time is in short supply when providing three meals and snacks for 800 pupils and 250 staff every day." Harrow has invested in its own 'de-waterer', which

shreds all food waste and extracts the water content, which makes it odourless and easier to handle. Kitchen staff dispose of food waste directly into the macerator, which in turn feeds into bins that are collected by system supplier PDM each week.

"This is just the first stage in a much bigger project," says Ms Tyler. "The next big step for us is not to send it away to a processing plant for renewable energy but to treat our food waste on-site to cut waste collection costs. I am hoping the school will purchase an Accelerated Composter, which will combine catering waste and green wastes from the gardens, woodland, playing fields and the golf course into compost within two weeks. In short, a sustainable on-site recycling unit."

Kirsty Shanahan is Harrow's communications manager.



John Lyon House.

On the banks of the Yarm

One of HMC's youngest schools redevelops an historic site

Yarm School, situated in the heart of the market town of Yarm near Stockton-on-Tees, sits in beautiful grounds with the Friarage, a Grade II listed building at its centre and with the river Tees running through the site. The school was founded in 1978 by a group of parents, many connected to the local ICI plant. It began with a Headmaster, two teachers and 60 pupils.

Since then it has grown quickly to establish an excellent reputation both for academic results and its exceptionally broad range of extracurricular activity and successes. It now has over 1100 pupils between the ages of three and 18 and is a significant employer in the locality.

Originally, the school opened in Yarm's former grammar school building, which had been vacated due to the arrival of a new comprehensive school. However, Yarm School was immediately a success and so, after two years, a bid was placed to secure the 20 acre site of a former 13th century Dominican friary over the road.

The Friarage, built in 1776, had been home to the Meynell family, promoters of the Stockton to Darlington Railway. However, early in the Second World War the house was taken over by ICI as 'shadow' premises – the dispersal of vital administrative facilities to reduce the risk from bombing – and the Meynells never returned.

In 1954 the Head Wrightson Company, a major Teesside heavy engineering firm, purchased the property to serve as its head office, but they were acquired by another company in 1977. The site came on the market and was bought by the school in 1980. Today the senior school and sixth form are based at the Friarage site and the preparatory school occupies the former grammar school building.

Due to further rapid growth and establishment, the school recognised the need to make significant improvements to its facilities. After abandoning an attempt to relocate to a green field site due to planning difficulties, Yarm School applied for

planning approval for a major £20m redevelopment project of its preparatory and senior school facilities. This was a far from foregone conclusion, due to many significant planning constraints – a conservation town, listed buildings and walls, protected trees, archaeological remains and flood risk amongst them – but permission was granted and the project started in 2009, the 30th anniversary of the school. The main phase will be completed during the school year 2011/12.

Already complete are a dining hall and kitchen, new mathematics department, fitness suite and religious studies department. For sport, there is a floodlit all-weather games facility including carpet cricket nets. At the preparatory school, there is a further similar sports pitch, new netball courts and a new school hall. A new Early School, for children aged four to seven, will be ready early in 2012.

The centrepiece of the project is a stunning performing arts facility adjoining a brand-new teaching block housing the English, modern languages and economics departments, as well as extensive new games changing rooms. In the performing arts centre, there will be a dance studio, music performance suite, 120-seat teaching theatre and a 750-seat auditorium.

They will all be accessed through a glass atrium, which will have wonderful views over the adjacent river Tees. Externally, there will be terraces overlooking the river. This facility will be completed by the end of 2011. The auditorium will be amongst the best performance spaces in the region, with an orchestra pit, hydraulic stage lift and a bespoke digital organ.

The school has seized the opportunity to design the new facility as sustainably as possible. All the new riverside accommodation will be heated by ground source heat pumps, which extract heat from the riverbank through 16 100-metre deep boreholes. Water for the changing rooms will be heated by solar panels, topped up by the heat pumps. The school will benefit from government grants for using this technology and



The Dovecote, which dates from Tudor times, is one of the oldest buildings in the town.



The Friarage, built in 1776, was the home of the Meynell family, promoters of the Stockton to Darlington Railway.

has calculated that not only is their plan environmentally friendly, but it is also cost-effective.

Other green features include high-performance fluorescent and LED fittings and automatic controls that dim lights in line with daylight levels and switch off lights in empty rooms. To round off the 'green agenda', as many sustainable naturally-occurring materials as possible are being used in the building, especially wood, with most of the walls in the auditorium being timber clad in oak.

At the heart of the school is a late Tudor dovecote, which is one of the town's oldest buildings. It is octagonal in form, brick-built with sandstone dressing – an unusual design and one of the few free-standing dovecotes in the area. It stands adjacent to the 18th century Friarage, now the school's main administration building, built on the original foundations and cellars of Yarm's friary, which was established in about 1220. The school has funded the restoration of the dovecote, which now stands magnificently in a newly-landscaped courtyard. The dovecote will be used as an external performance venue and its renovation will be completed during 2011.

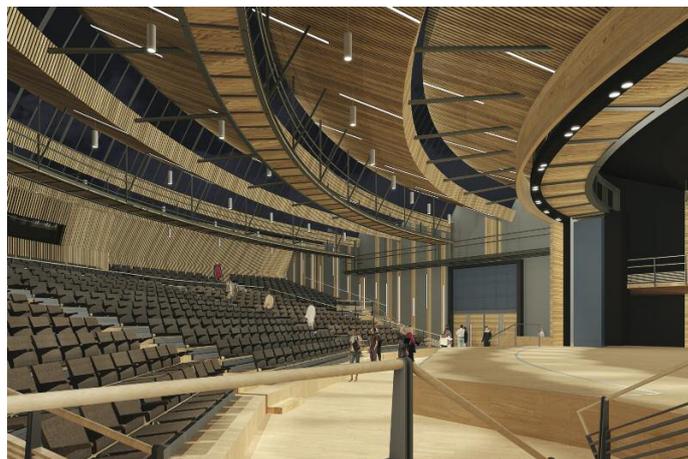
Yarm School's project is attracting much attention, not only for its scale and cost in a time of general austerity, but also due to its architectural merit. The design is likely to be nominated for a number of architectural awards and the setting is breathtaking! The Yarm School site, with its mediaeval foundations, its Tudor dovecote and 18th century mansion and its stunning modern buildings is an appropriate tribute to those who founded the school in response to local needs. Parents who wanted good education for their children anticipated current educational trends by over 30 years. *Si monumentum requiris...*

David Dunn has been Headmaster of Yarm School since 1999.



On the banks of the Yarm.

The performing arts facility, centrepiece of Yarm's development project.



Taking one for Team Green

Roger V Mobs finds the fourth form far from favourable for the future

“So. Any questions?”

My address on sustainability was over. The fourth form stared at me with sullen apathy.

Mandy O’Hara stood up.

“Headmaster, I think I speak for all right-minded pupils when I say, respectfully, that we are as hapless sea birds over whom much oil has been poured. Your idea to teach green issues and sustainability is self-righteous, fascist pants. Far from being the pinko veggie mantra you want us to think you’re delivering, it’s actually jack booted eco-imperialism on an unprecedented scale. For example...”

Five minutes later, Mandy had finished. There was much hearty applause from an unreconstructed fourth form.

“Look you lot, act your age. The governors want me to take green issues seriously and I need help. Let me remind you it was Al Gore who said global warming is a more serious threat than terrorism.”

“Well unless the terrorist is on my plane, a three degree hike won’t bother me much,” came a rejoinder from the back. “FIX THE HEATING.”

A whisper drifted across the assembly hall like tumbleweed.

“You want wind power, Mobsy? Then harness this!” An unsavoury detonation ensued. “You could light up Mexico City on the back of that,” continued the proud energy provider.

I wondered if emoting in cliché might silence the guffawing.

“We owe it to the children!”

“No we don’t,” somebody shouted. “No we most absolutely don’t. Why can’t humanity overcome nature instead of living like a whimpering slave under its terms?”

“And another thing,” came a voice from the centre. “This transgenerational arrogance is breathtaking. Who are we to decide how future generations should live? What if Neanderthals had been as conceited as us and suppressed the use of fire because it scared the mammoths?”

“Or, less prosaically, if Pericles had banned the mining of marble because he was worried about the effects of dust on the centaurs?” cried another without looking up from his iPad.

“But all we’re doing now is bulldozing trees and then naming housing estates after them,” I thundered magnificently. “And unless we teach them to do otherwise, your grandchildren won’t be going green: they’ll be glowing green.”

“On a point of logic, Headmaster,” hissed a tiny but sinister voice, “which future generation are you saving, exactly? You talk about saving grandchildren, but I assume you also intend to save human beings 100 generations later. If so, you are necessarily assuming that all intervening generations will support this bogus 21st century consensus in which progress is seen as the continuing effort to make things as good as they used to be. Unadulterated idiocy.”



“How do we know you really believe in sustainability anyway?” someone hollered.

I was drowning in exasperation. “I’ve been married 20 years. Look, for the love of life, *one of you* must be on side. You’re supposed to be obsessed with this stuff.”

But by now, a repeated cry of “Use your brain, don’t sustain” had been taken up by the back rows, and my words had all the impact of a chocolate frying pan. Mandy O’Hara stood up again and gestured for the hall to fall silent. It did so immediately.

“Headmaster, we clearly need science to solve all the problems we wouldn’t have if there were no science.”

“Eh?”

“So we may as well see if science can take us – forgive me – *higher than Gaia*. You need help with the governors. We’ll give you that help.”

“This isn’t because you all love me, is it?”

“No. Now keep listening.”

“Fabulous wind turbine, Mobs,” growled the chairman as he walked around the annual summer fete. “Just what the governors wanted. The bio-fuel the kids are making even smells good. They seem to thrive on this sustainability nonsense. Look at them all. Drunk on the biggest lie of the century, God help them. We’ll be under a mile of sheet ice in a few generations. What good will all this do us then?”

He walked off to meet with the local MP who was emerging from a turbocharged Range Rover. Mandy appeared at my shoulder.

“Hello, sir. All well with the chairman?”

“He’s ecstatic. Just don’t let him near the base of the turbine. What have I done, Mandy? Oh, what have I done?”

“In return for the fulsome support of the young, you’ve agreed to our having a distillery powered by a wind turbine, sir. There’s no shame in that. I believe they call it Realpolitik.”

“What are you making today?”

“We’re sticking with the whiskey. It’s the leading brand with the sixth form. We’ve even got a picture of the Chapel on the label now. Fancy a drop, sir? Three quid to you.”

“Why not?” I took a sip while the fourth form flute quintet played *Blowin’ in the Wind*. “Good Lord, that’s strong. What were you thinking of?”

“Why, sir! You know us!” Mandy began skipping off into the depths of her distillery. “We just wanted to create a drink that was sustaining.”

Roger V Mobs is a season ticket holder at The Priory.

Sustainability: the capacity to endure

Sue Bricket is in it for the long haul, whatever happens to the planet

When I learned that one of the themes of this issue of *Conference & Common Room* was to be sustainability, I was not in the least surprised. The lights in our bursar's office burn late into the night as he and his legion of assistants churn out reams of paper on the proper management of the cutting-edge compost-driven photocopier recently installed in the common room.

However, my heart sank somewhat as I have very little to say on the subject. Those of you who might even now be forming the witty repost that Sue Bricket has very little to say on any subject, need not trouble: I'm ahead of you.

Nevertheless, our department, like all English departments, is thoroughly committed to the cross-curricular approach, provided it is kept under firm control, and so my statutory brush with sustainability in my professional capacity this year has been to introduce Year 12 to the school of ecocriticism.

They were intrigued and productive, but I fear I can't make an article out of their responses to the idea that *Wuthering Heights* 'addresses the interaction of human and extra-human

phenomena, in this case, the Yorkshire landscape, the weather and the ubiquitous animal imagery invoked throughout the text'.

Even extensive further reading in the works of Glotfelty and Zapf failed to show me a way forward and so I thought I would adopt a technique first taught me by Year 11 students: if the topic you have revised fails to come up in your Mock, find the nearest question and write about it anyway.

Sustainability is essentially about doing things in ways that work now and will continue to work long into the future. Put it another way: it's all about survival – see where I'm going? – and, as far as members of the common room are concerned, that means being able to survive as a teacher over the long term.

By long term, I do not, in this instance, mean the autumn term, though that is a long term, heaven knows, but a whole career, so my article will be about this. Year 11, I salute you.

You now need to bear with me while I light a scented candle and breathe deeply. If you read my last article, you will know that, in doing this, I am eating into the stock of wares for my



At last Sue had found an audience for her ecocriticism class.

Sustainability

retirement candle emporium, but being able to relax is vital to sustainable teaching so it must be done.

Now that I'm relaxed, I feel able to share with you one of the main things I have observed about surviving teaching: knowing what not to say is a key skill. Sadly, in my case, knowing what not to say and remembering not to say it, has not always been straightforward and has, on occasion, made teaching seem nearly unsustainable.

Quite early on in my career, I found out that if you value your life, it's best not to say to a colleague: "When you've got a moment could you..." This is a phrase that makes teachers freeze on the spot and go ashen or puce (depending on hypertension levels).

An icy pause may follow before the inevitable apoplectic outburst along the lines of: "A moment? A moment? You think I might have a moment before the end of the week, or the end of term or the end of the year? Next year's going to be just as bad, so I don't actually have a moment, nor will I have while I am a teacher, which won't be long if people keep making unreasonable demands on me."

By this time, silence will have fallen in the staffroom as colleagues wait to see how this all-too-familiar encounter will end. One of the combatants will storm out of the room and whichever one is left will probably turn to the assembled colleagues for support. Those colleagues, however, will be suddenly busy with paperwork or will find that the reluctant photocopier has burst into life and is stapling so noisily that further conversation is impossible.

Equally irritating to teachers is the veiled subject-specific insult, which in my case goes along the lines of: "I really admire English teachers. I don't know how you do it." Innocuous, eh? Think again. This actually comes firmly into the 'what not to say' category as it means something like, 'How on earth do you fill seven hours a fortnight waffling on and teaching them to read and write, which they could already do when they arrived in Year 7?'

A skilled practitioner may add that it must be 'nice' to be able to set reading as a homework. English teachers across the land

will rise up *en masse* at such comments then limp broken away, dragging their sacks of essay-marking behind them and sobbing gently.

Friends and acquaintances outside the profession do not always have the gift of the right word either. A few weeks before the end of term, when exhaustion hits its peak, non-teachers are well able to light the blue touch paper and, if they are feeling cautious, retire, something teachers will now not be able to do until the age of 95.

I have lost count of the number of people who, on discovering that I'm a teacher, have uttered the fatal words: "I've always fancied doing a bit of teaching myself." For years I adopted the policy of smiling blandly whilst picturing them being torn apart by a frisky pack of Year 9s last lesson on a Friday. Recently, this has not sufficed – perhaps I've had a busy term – so I have had to resort to spilling their drink on them and muttering, "Gutted", a pleasingly ambiguous term often used by pupils caught in misdemeanors.

I think it is the 'bit' of teaching that is so annoying: it implies that the job is somehow lightweight. It can be dipped into and out of on a whim (hence the 'fancied'), requires no training and can be done by anyone. Actually, it's even more irritating than I realised. Next time I hear it, I shall escalate my response to a swift jab in the eye with a sausage-laden cocktail stick under the pretence of emphasising a point.

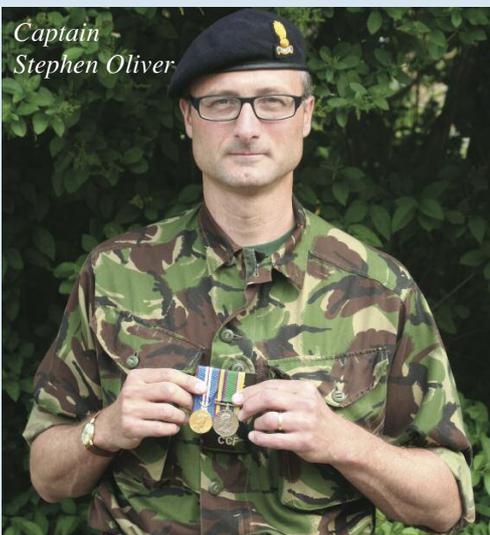
My favourite example of what not to say happened some years ago, when our department was visited for a few days by a publisher contemplating a career change. When asked over coffee at break why she was thinking of teaching, she said that she was finding her present job too stressful and had decided to look for "a nice little part-time job".

Teaching was the obvious choice. There was a moment of utter silence, broken only by the sound of a colleague choking on a suddenly inhaled biscuit, and I found myself wondering whether our visitor might not find publishing a more sustainable option than teaching after all.

Sue Bricket is not as green as she is cabbage looking.

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.



Medal for St Benedict's deputy head

Stephen Oliver, pastoral deputy head at St Benedict's School, was recently awarded the Cadet Forces Medal in recognition of his dedicated and long service in the cadet forces, having been involved in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) since 1990. He teaches classics and RE and joined St Benedict's as deputy head in September 2008 from Stonyhurst College, where he had been a housemaster.

Captain Oliver has a reputation for discipline but stresses that CCF has so much more to offer than drill. "I enjoy going on field trips and summer camps to see, first hand, the variety of skills pupils develop through CCF. It is particularly pleasing to see the positive effect all this has on shaping their character and personality. Those promoted to higher ranks take their responsibilities for the younger cadets very seriously and a great team spirit is engendered in the group. The CCF is a great school for life."

In 2002 Stephen was presented with the Golden Jubilee Medal to mark the 50th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth II.

Green guilt

As St Augustine would have put it, “Lord, make me green, but not yet.”

Experience of Headship rapidly trains one to live constantly with feelings of inadequacy. Most Heads get to the hot-seat after a successful spell as a specialist in a subject department, followed by a few years getting a bigger view somewhere in senior management.

When we reach the top, however, we quickly discover just how much we *don't* know. As with baboons, the higher we climb, the more obvious our unattractive parts become, fuelling that sense of being a fraud, of being constantly on the point of being uncovered as such, exposed to ridicule and, in some unquantifiable way, rejected.

I assumed, when I joined HMC, that I would be the only member who wasn't at least 6' 6" tall and possessed of an Oxford or Cambridge Blue in rowing or rugby or both. In truth we are an eclectic bunch, and even sissies like me have always been made to feel welcome: but that sense of inferiority persists.

My therapist assures me that such paranoia is perfectly normal in Heads: after all, they *are* out to get us, even if we don't quite know who 'they' are! And the feeling is constantly reinforced. Notwithstanding my 20 years as a Head, I am constantly reminded of the gaps in my knowledge – more than ever, perhaps.

When conducting a curriculum review, for example, I am forced to confess that I blagged my way to Headship without ever having constructed a timetable. So, when a serious-minded head of department looks me in the eye and says, “It will never work, Headmaster,” producing endless spreadsheets to demonstrate how the loss of 20 minutes' teaching in Year 8 will make it impossible satisfactorily to cover the GCSE syllabus three years later, I am generally at a loss. In response I can only cling to my tiny patch of moral high ground, mutter darkly about choice and breadth, and call to mind the old naval signal ‘Am making smoke and retreating’.

The point is, I suppose, that Heads are expected to be omniscient. Only the other day, walking over to school lunch, I was accosted by dozens of students who had spotted an enormous pall of smoke in the sky, and demanded to know what it was. I hadn't even noticed it.

Quick on my feet, I suggested one of them use their android phone to check the local news, and we were instantly informed that the smoke was coming from a nearby scrapyard on fire (we're gritty in northern city schools).

I could have found that out for myself. Actually, I couldn't: my clever phone apparently has more memory and apps than my brain has accumulated in a lifetime, while I can barely handle emails. But the point is that my pupils assumed I would know what was going on. A useful life-lesson was learned there, that those in charge are seldom up to speed with reality. For me it

Bernard Trafford



‘The point is, I suppose, that Heads are expected to be omniscient.’

was a reminder that omniscience is another of those expectations that we can't hope to live up to.

As a result, we leaders spend a great deal of time papering over the cracks: bluffing, indeed. I'm not sure what my strengths as a Head are overall, though I think I have a keen appreciation of my weaknesses. But one strength I can boast: I know unequivocally that I am a bluffer *par excellence*. So, in common with all who regularly skate on thin ice, I've learned to live with that constant sense of insecurity and don't allow it to overwhelm me.

Now, alas, I seem obliged to live with a new burden. All of us are nowadays assailed by a new form of guilt, which is thrust on us from all sides. It comes from the media. It comes from government. It comes from scientists (and whoever used to listen to them before?). Worst of all, it comes, powerfully, incessantly, and sometimes shrilly, from the boys and girls I teach. This new phenomenon I shall term *green guilt*.

I'm used to living with a more general sense of guilt. Comedian Billy Connolly used to say that if you are born a Roman Catholic, you are born with an A level in guilt. I was so born, and I guess I do carry that religio-genetic inheritance.

Sustainability

Fortunately, more than half a century has helped me learn to live with it.

But this new green form of guilt gets my goat. I guess I should call it sustainability awareness. We all know nowadays that we shouldn't use old-fashioned light-bulbs, that we must double-glaze our windows and stuff our roof spaces with insulation. It's logical and makes life cheaper, so why object? We all know why we have to do it: fossil fuels; greenhouse gases; ozone layer; environmental damage (this latest wheeze of setting off explosions underground to release shale gas scares me out of my wits); nuclear disasters – Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima. We all know the hazards and we know we need to change the way we live. But, though we know it all, we don't do as much as we should.

That is why, I guess, we are so often required to go on a green guilt trip. When I fly from Newcastle down to see my aged parents in Somerset, people look reproachfully. The fact that my flight time to Bristol is just under an hour, instead of nine on one of those painfully slow trains that meanders from Inverness to Penzance, counts as nought: my carbon footprint is judged to be even bigger than my size 12 shoes.

A green crusader recently lambasted me for the number of halogen spotlights I have in my home. No matter that I can't stand the gloom of low energy bulbs: apparently I should inhabit a perpetual twilight, waiting ages for bulbs to warm up and reading my book by the glow of self-satisfaction at my fuel thrift. Have you seen those new low-energy spotlights to replace halogen bulbs? Take my advice: try a candle.

It's so dispiriting. Just five years ago we were doing some building work on our country cottage. It's bright and windy there so, with our neighbours, we thought we would put solar panels on the south-facing roofs and install a wind generator. The renewable energy expert was enthusiastic. For a mere £7500 we could have a five-metre-high windmill – oops, sorry, Guv: the government subsidy has just been cut on those – which would supply a significant amount of electricity. How much power, we asked. Would we be able to go all electric and clean, and heat the house and water from wind-power?

The engineer looked shocked. Of course not, he said. You can't get that much from one small turbine. But you could run six low energy bulbs and your laptop off it. Dismayed, we opted for oil-fired central heating.

Okay! I stand condemned as an unreconstructed old gas-guzzler. But I'm busy, and I need my creature comforts; warmth and a decent quantity of light for a start. Why is it that the sustainable alternative is so often so disappointing?

It gets worse. As a teacher I preach what I don't practise. All right, so I don't personally teach lessons on sustainable energy, but my geographers and physicists do, incessantly. Children nowadays know everything there is to know about renewable, biomass, biofuels and green politics. And they enquire accusingly about the way we run the school.

My bursar is regularly quizzed, mercilessly, by the school council, grilled about the energy efficiency of our buildings. He adopts a hunted look. It's a 1906 building in a conservation area, he explains. Yes it is still single-glazed and, no, he doesn't know when we are going to double-glaze the whole blooming building – when we win the lottery presumably! No, a big hollow space like the school hall is not energy-efficient. Yes, the old radiators with six-inch wide pipes are wasteful, but they are original and still working.

And so it goes on. Polite yet firm, and tirelessly judgemental, his inquisitors look him in the eye and even an experienced bursar, builder of many buildings and unparalleled expert on the intricacies of drainage and waste removal, is abashed.

The young are, as always, so very demanding. No matter that we have those tri-coloured recycling bins all round school: they still want to know how many cubic metres of cardboard we have crushed in the past month. The city authorities are so green now they send a man on an electric motorbike to talk to the children in the junior school. The bike disappoints. Somehow the sewing-machine noise as he speeds away at the end doesn't match the thrill of a big Ducati opening up on the straight: and it's all a little smug.

Actually, it's all so damned virtuous. The path of righteousness is not so much a hard or stony one as dreadfully dull! I'm reminded of the man who asked his doctor how he could live to be a 100. "Don't drink, don't smoke and don't consort with women," he replied.

"And then will I live to be a 100?"

"No, but it'll seem like it."

There's a parallel with the saints of old, the early Church Fathers. Virtue is never enough. However many energy saving-devices we install, however much we lag and insulate, turn things down or accelerate gently, the green guilt-trippers are never satisfied. Just as those early saints fasted still more fiercely, scourged themselves or stood on pillars for years at a time in their unfulfilled quest for holiness, green guilt drives us to ever greater extremes of ... moderation.

It's all so unfair. Those local council eco-warriors don't seem to do much about turning off the blaze of street lights that allow real darkness to descend on the UK only in Kielder or the Scottish Highlands. And the kids who look so disapprovingly at the school's energy figures are slow to ask the DJ to turn down the volume or reduce the disco's dazzling light-show. And no one tells the footballer who lives round the corner from me, less than half my age, that his Ferrari with the Newcastle United number plate is noisy, garish and drinks spirit even quicker than George Best ever managed.

I'm sorry. I *will* keep trying. But just stop making me feel so bad about it all the time. I will join the green revolution, honest. But first just let me take the roof off the car one last time, put my foot down and see if the acceleration is as blistering as it used to be. Allow me to bank up the coal fire, turn all the lights on and have a party. Better still, fire up the patio heater and have one last barbecue.

Then I will finally retire to my yurt (made entirely of renewable and ethically-sourced materials); culture my own yoghurt; grow my own mung beans; weave my own socks; and live in harmony with my world. When the fossil fuels have run out, when you can't see the hills for wind farms or the sea for curiously clanking wave-machines, and when everything seems dark and cold, I'll wrap myself in my home-spun alpaca-wool duvet, close my eyes and dream the dreams of the old days.

My, how we used to live!

Bernard Trafford is Headmaster of the Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School and a former Chairman of HMC.

You can't compare apples and oranges

But you can combine them, says Nick Dennis. Is mobile technology in the classroom the future of teaching and learning?

Many schools are wary of introducing mobile devices to the classroom. The main fear seems to be that they get in the way of students' engagement in lessons, despite much recent academic research to the contrary. Is this simply the result of the technology becoming the focal point rather than the learning?

At Felsted we decided to find out for ourselves and so we are mid-way through a two-year trial using Apple mobile devices – iPhones, iPads and MacBooks – to supplement traditional

teaching practice. We hope to show that a mobile-enhanced teaching and learning platform, when placed within the correct pedagogical context, can bring substantial benefits to students' academic progress and also to pastoral care in the school.

As a history teacher with an interest in the relationship between historical processes and the use of ICT to aid understanding, I began to think about how technology could supplement effective classroom practice. I became aware of the growing body of research on effective teaching and assessment strategies by Dylan Wiliam and John Hattie, and was also keen to explore the possibilities of using mobile technology to improve safeguarding and to improve the accessibility of administrative information at the school.

Apple and Orange

As Apple is the foremost proponent in the use of mobile technology, I went to the company to explain my interest in creating a mobile-enhanced teaching platform at Felsted. Once the company understood the goals we had for our students and the school, Apple named Felsted as one of the UK's first Apple Regional Training Centres for Education – one of the few independent schools to have this status and the only one in the UK with history as its focus.

Apple initially loaned the school a selection of MacBooks and, when we decided to expand the programme with a focus on

Apples are Felsted's main squeeze

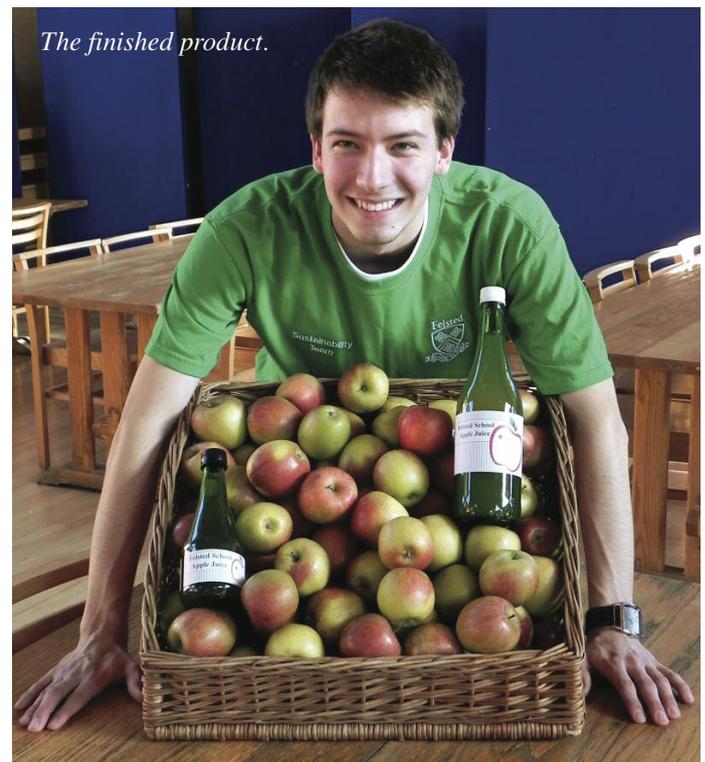
The very most is being squeezed out of natural resources that would otherwise go to waste at Felsted. Filip Bigos, an 18-year-old upper sixth International Baccalaureate student and head of the school's sustainability team, has pioneered an apple juice manufacturing business that has turned nearly 500kg of abandoned fallen fruit into revenue that has been put towards funding other sustainability initiatives at Felsted.

"We collected the apples that had fallen from trees around the school's grounds and also put out a request to students and parents for any spare apples from trees at home," explains Filip. "Piles of them came flooding in, perhaps because we offered a free bottle of juice to anyone who contributed."

The sustainability team then located an apple press and set about squeezing the juice and bottling it in recycled glass bottles with their own Felsted label. "We have had to market and sell the juice around the school and supply it to the village shop and delicatessen," says Filip, "so it has been a fairly long process, but the rewards have made it all worthwhile. Not only have we made a healthy product out of fruit that would have been allowed to perish, but we've made some money too!"

Sustainability is high on the agenda at Felsted. Proceeds of the apple juice initiative will go towards funding many other projects designed to promote awareness of the environment, including a 'switch-off' scheme with labels on all computers and lights in the school's classroom blocks and boarding houses; and a 'swishing' event for parents and students to swap their unwanted clothes. More ideas are welcomed and the sustainability team has sent out a questionnaire to all students asking for suggestions as to how the school can further improve its sustainable credentials.

"So far we've received over a hundred replies, pointing to key areas that students would like us to focus on," says Filip. "This is the first time we've carried out a survey of this kind and we're



The finished product.

hoping that it will truly reflect the needs of the school in terms of sustainability and that we will be able to pay for any initiatives we decide to go ahead with using money raised by the sale of the apple juice.

"Students here are very keen that everyone should contribute towards the sustainability of the Earth and we're doing all we can to make Felsted as sustainable as possible."

Filip Bigos is from Slovakia.

Sustainability

mobile learning over a two-year span, the company issued class sets of iPods and iPads.

Mobile phone company Orange has also become closely involved and has issued iPhones to Felsted's housemasters and housemistresses to help them stay in touch with their charges throughout the day and to have instant access to the medical, registration and academic information that they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Both companies are monitoring our trial with interest, as is the University of Kent's psychology department, and we are hosting a number of events throughout the trial to show other schools how the technology complements traditional methods and what other benefits it can have for the school and its students.

Research

Felsted teaches pupils from the age of four, but our mobile technology project is focused on four academic departments in the senior school. These subject areas were chosen specifically as they have no obvious link with technology in the classroom – business studies/economics, biology, classics and history – and we have made sure to choose pupils of a variety of ages, abilities and examination groups.

As enhancing student progression is the main goal of our trial, we will be using baseline student data and target grades as the starting point for a new measuring system, which is currently being devised on the basis of the work of Graham Nuthall. Overseeing the research will be Miles Berry, senior lecturer in information and communication technology at Roehampton University, who holds the professional qualification Apple Distinguished Educator.

An area we are looking to explore throughout the course of the trial is Dylan Wiliam's use of 'Hinge Questions' to improve assessment of learning and to suggest the next steps for progression. A Hinge Question is a multiple-choice question with each of the answers giving an insight into the individual student's level of understanding. The answers are recorded and collated by the mobile devices so that the teacher can note each student's level of understanding and ensure that individuals are constantly being challenged academically.

If the results of the first year of the trial are successful, Felsted's plan is to roll out the mobile-enhanced teaching

platform to all other areas of the school in the second year and to monitor its effects.

Benefits

There are potentially huge benefits to the school and its students through the widespread use of mobile devices in a pedagogically-focused way. No longer do students need to be tied to particular classrooms in an 'office model' mode of using technology. Lessons can be made flexible and movable thanks to the portability and multi-functionality of these mobile devices.

If basic academic tools, such as an electronic dictionary, thesaurus, calculator and planner, are built in and on hand at all times, students are more likely to make use of them. Their functions as camera/video recorders and word processors are also invaluable for making accurate notes during lessons.

Away from the classroom, outdoor and international visits can be enhanced with GPS use and the opportunity to create instant video blogs. At Felsted, we are also developing a mobile interface to allow students to gain easy access to their academic information, such as target grades and reports, and link to personal and school calendars.

On the pastoral side, we are expecting tutoring at Felsted to be boosted by the use of mobile devices too. Staff have instant access to student information, such as sanctions, commendations, medical details and contacts for parents, anywhere on the school campus and beyond. By creating social networking groups for houses, year groups and the school forum, which are accessible by the mobile devices, we see a way of bringing together the school community.

By embracing this new technology and making use of it to improve Felsted's already effective practices for teaching, learning, pastoral care and community building, by increasing speed and precision, we aim to ensure that our students have all the support they need to get the very most out of their school experience.

Dr Nick Dennis teaches history and classics at Felsted, where he is also an assistant head. He has a Master's and PhD from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and has worked in a variety of state and independent schools in academic and pastoral roles.



Dr Nick Dennis and Felsted pupils.

Social networking – the not so virtual world

Simon Lockyer proposes some ways of disentangling The Net

Parents and teachers up and down the country might have been forgiven for celebrating news that Facebook appears to be in decline. According to a recent report, the absolute number of school-age users has tumbled by up to 20% in a mere six months. In the US, Facebook has lost six million users, whilst numbers in the UK, Norway and Russia have all fallen by more than 100,000. This phenomenon will not leave a void for long, however, and the first to discover the ‘next new thing’ in social networking will almost certainly be our pupils.

To describe the internet as a virtual world can be highly misleading when the impact of on-line experience is often painfully real in young people’s lives. Pastoral heads will recognise that they have a responsibility for developing an effective e-safety strategy in preparing pupils to access the internet but also in responding to cyber bullying.

Experience suggests that schools cannot adopt a policy that abdicates their responsibility at the bell or at the gates of the school, however much they seek to reiterate the role that parents have in restricting and monitoring their children’s internet use. The Education Bill 2011 provides schools with explicit powers to search electronic devices and to destroy or pass on information to the police; whilst helpful in empowering teachers, it also implies that schools have a greater responsibility to act.

In a recent and probably familiar incident for many readers, a number of girls had begun an innocuous on-line exchange which, as the evening progressed, became more personal and unpleasant. By the following morning one girl had suffered a sleepless night in tears and her parents had contacted the school to request an immediate meeting to discuss the bullying their daughter had allegedly experienced. Transcripts and screenshots were produced to show how upsetting the exchange had been.

The school responded with sympathy and support, intervening as far as we felt able, but the incident also highlighted the concern that a young pupil had 24 hour free access to the internet, Skype and a mobile phone in her bedroom, thus enabling her to participate in an exchange that had escalated between the hours of midnight and 2.30am on a school week day.

The experience was certainly real, not virtual, but if the school was to have any positive influence in a situation such as this in future, then we had to be pre-emptive, educating pupils on how to use the internet and mobile communication responsibly and safely.

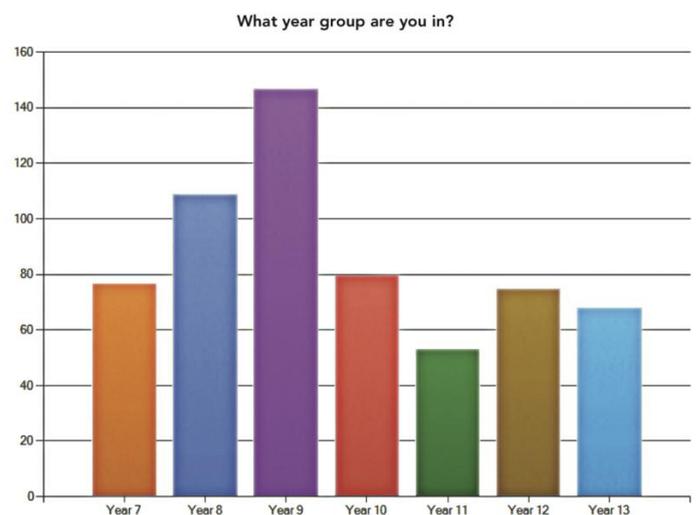
Safer Internet Week in early February has become a regular calendar event at The Portsmouth Grammar School and provides an opportunity for the community to review and consider how pupil and staff usage and trends are evolving. It is also an opportunity for us to take stock of the current guidance we provide staff and coincides with an annual review of our ICT Acceptable User Policy.



Simon Lockyer

This year we focused on ‘Our virtual lives’ and invited pupils, parents and staff to complete an online survey (with the help of Survey Monkey) in the hope that we could design a more meaningful pastoral curriculum. The findings were very interesting and reflected a shared desire to learn how to best make use of social networking.

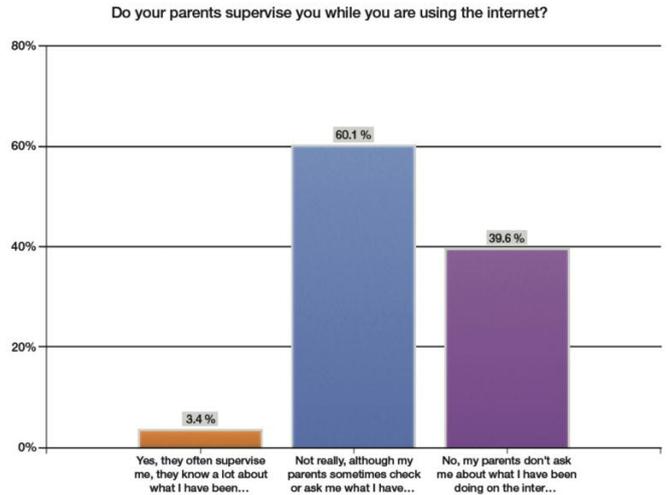
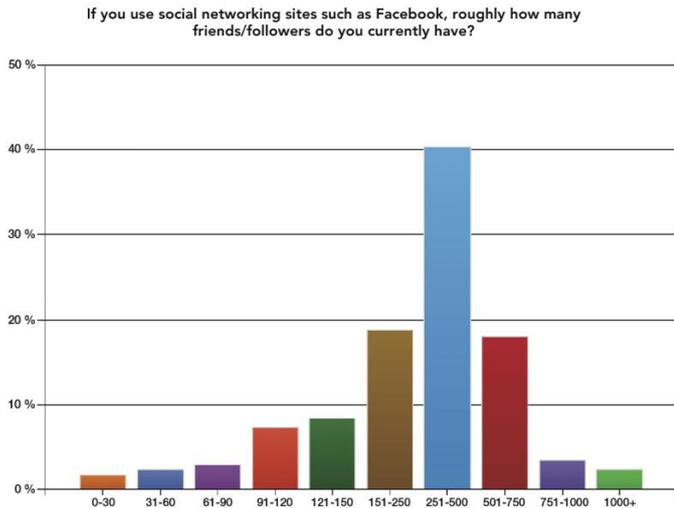
The survey generated 740 responses from pupils and 185 from parents; a similar survey in the junior school also attracted considerable interest. Almost 100% of pupils responding had a Facebook page and spent on average 1.5 hours each day on the site. Year 9 was the time when most pupils became particularly active in social networking, but it was also clear that many pupils had ignored the age restriction on Facebook and created profiles when they were significantly under age.



Whilst most parents tended to have no more than 30 friends, pupils claimed to have on average 200 friends and in some cases over 1000, suggesting that parents and pupils’ notions of a ‘friend’ probably differed enormously. We were, however, encouraged to find that, thanks to an earlier campaign in school, pupils were much more aware of the importance of establishing appropriate security settings.

In a recent sixth form practice career interview, one unsuspecting pupil was neatly reminded of the importance of security settings when his interviewer made reference to the pupil’s unprotected Facebook page. An important lesson was swiftly learned about the likely curiosity of future employers.

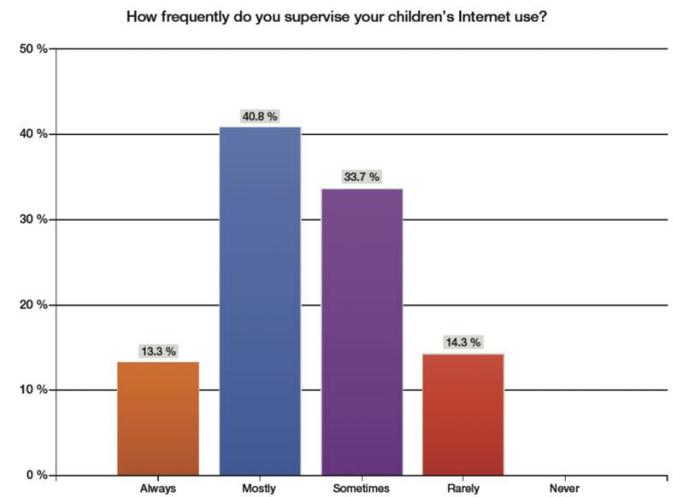
Changing times



Whilst nearly 30% of pupils admitted to having something written at some stage that had upset them, it was encouraging that most felt confident about how to take appropriate action in reporting their concern, understanding where they can go for help.

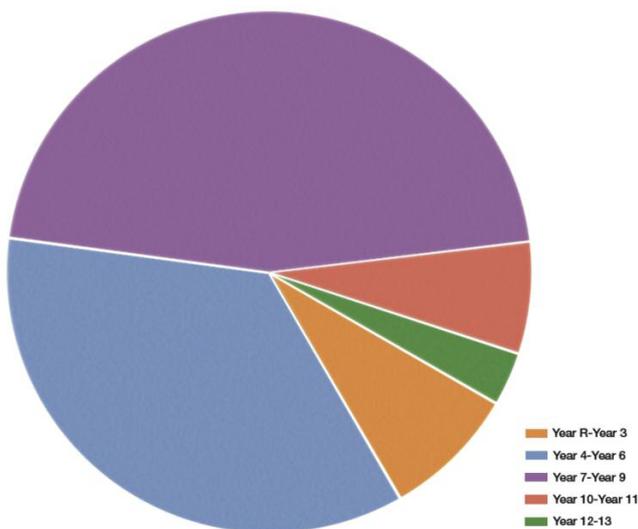
The survey underlined the significance of an effective peer counselling system, as 52% of pupils suggested they would prefer to speak with a friend or peer initially. One development from this year's survey will be to train peer counsellors in this area so that they can act as model social media citizens.

The parental body showed a great disparity in concern and level of expertise. Some parents, for example, felt confident that they were taking proactive measures and even suggested that the school should have little involvement; other parents wanted to see Facebook banned and were calling out for help and advice. In their responses, parents tended to agree that the start of Year 7 was an opportune stage to discuss internet safety, but our survey, which included the junior school, suggested that even this may be too late.

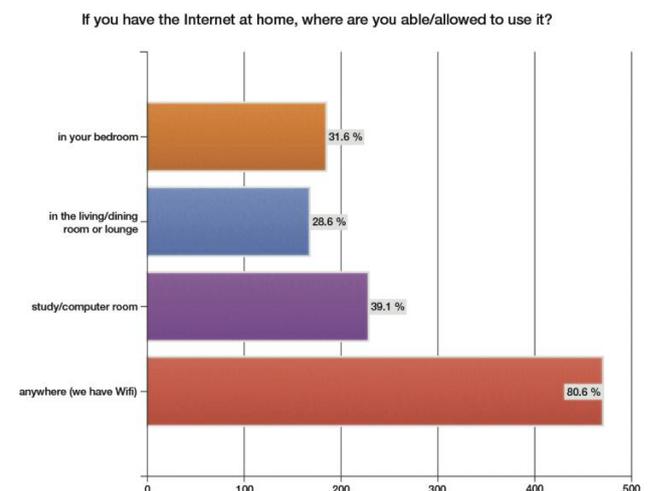


Whilst many parents like to think they are monitoring their children's on-line activity, their own children suggested that they were largely un-policed and that discussions at home about the internet were rare. Our findings did suggest, however, that one practical way forward was for parents to become 'friends' with their children, interacting on-line and providing parental support by being an active part of their child's virtual world. Given that it is no longer enough to have the family computer in a communal space, with WiFi communication now mobile, this simple approach can be surprisingly effective.

If your parents have spoken to you about staying safe on the internet, how old were you when you discussed this?



One fascinating discrepancy in the responses we received was the disparity between the parents' perception of their child's monitoring and that of their child.



So where does this leave the school in grappling with an ever changing phenomenon?

One thing that remains constant is our need to focus on providing the best support for pupils, parents and staff when a problem arises. We encourage pupils to resist responding to unpleasant comments; where possible they should block 'friends' and, if they are not already, they should add parents as friends as this can have a dramatic effect.

Parents should also avoid being drawn into negative comments, but, in much the same way as they can have a moderating effect in person, their very presence and, occasionally, carefully-structured online comment can and does have a positive effect. It is also helpful to be familiar with the user's 'Rights and Responsibilities' on sites such as Facebook and to have to hand a copy of *Facebook Community Standards* to provide guidance on how to report a violation.

We recently hosted a series of CEOP presentations for pupils, parents and staff, which was excellent in providing up-to-date advice and even incorporated our survey responses. In future we plan to hold practical sessions to enable parents to develop the skills to monitor and respond to their child's use of the internet and mobile technology.

The results of the social networking survey have prompted some immediate actions, but any lasting impact will only be established with a regular and embedded programme that is flexible enough to adapt to changes in trend and practice.

Pupils at the school felt strongly that this was a matter for which they were responsible, but recognised the importance of promoting safe and positive use. Tutor groups have produced blueprints for a code of conduct, which, after consultation with pupil councils, have been distilled into a *Pupil Code of Practice* that is now published in the school's termly diary.

The school will continue to use the Safer Internet week to refresh knowledge and highlight issues. As Dr Tanya Byron once commented: "Children and young people need to be empowered to keep themselves safe. This isn't just about a top-down approach. Children will be children – pushing boundaries and taking risks. At a public swimming pool we have gates, put up signs, have lifeguards and shallow ends; but we also teach children how to swim."

What we have become conscious of is that there are a number of parents who can either not swim at all or who lack the confidence that their children feel. We recognise that we will only be effective if we can usefully engage both generations. Regardless of the changes in technology, our main focus remains the nurturing and support of our pupils so that they can be resilient in both the virtual and real worlds in which they live.

Simon Lockyer has been second master at The Portsmouth Grammar School since September 2009.

'To describe the internet as a virtual world can be highly misleading when the impact of on-line experience is often painfully real in young people's lives.'

HERE & THERE

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Ugandan visit.

Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School increases awareness of child soldiers

Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School in Elstree has hosted a stunning event to increase awareness of the problem of child soldiers in Africa.

Martin Mapenduzi, Emmanuel Awio and Michael Okello, visitors from Uganda, spent three days entertaining and educating the boys and they finished with a performance before an invited audience of parents, pupils and friends of the school.

Emmanuel and Michael are members of the Ndere troupe, a 60-strong theatre group in Uganda, and they presented an amazing array of skills, traditional dancing and singing, accompanied by the playing of such Ugandan instruments as the *calibas* and *adungu*. Their humour and their colourful costumes added a welcome lighter side to an evening that dealt with such a serious and emotive topic.

Emmanuel Jal, a former child soldier in the Sudan, brought rap music, poetry, personal testimony and, again, much good humour to the party. His success in raising teachers and parents to their feet as they danced to his song, *We want peace*, was a joy to behold.

Martin Mapenduzi spoke eloquently about the tragedy of child soldiers, adding enormously to our knowledge and understanding of the problem: it is estimated that 50,000 children in northern Uganda were abducted during the 20-year struggle there, with perhaps 20,000 never returning to their homes.

The evening finished with the solemnity of David Salmon's Requiem, which was sung by a choir of staff and senior pupils.



Nick Oulton

Future perfect?

Nicholas Oulton outlines new approaches to teaching and learning

The world is fast changing and, driven by rapid economic, technical and social changes, prep and senior schools are beginning to examine whether the way pupils are prepared for entrance exams needs to change. As a fresh crop of boys and girls arrive at senior school, we seek ways to help children to settle in and to flourish as adults in a world that is increasingly unpredictable.

'The child is father of the man.' So wrote William Wordsworth nearly 200 years ago in a poem to explain his love of the natural world around him.

My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky: so was it when my life began, so is it now I am a man.'

The things that caught Wordsworth's imagination in childhood endured through his adult life and his poetry speaks volumes for how we all develop. Although no educationist, Wordsworth knew that what we learn and how we learn in our youth affects us for life. Many of our interests, our hobbies, our passions and dislikes can be traced back to what and how we learned as children.

Wordsworth's life (1770-1850) spanned a time of enormous change – the mechanisation of agriculture, industrialisation and technological breakthroughs all drove huge social and political upheavals in his day. Now, in the infant years of this millennium, we are seeing another seismic shift of the world's economic and social fault lines, on a similar scale to that of Wordsworth's time.

The rapid technological and scientific developments in medicine, in IT and in environmental understanding are all made possible by the power of mass digital communications. People are not only acquiring knowledge in different ways; the nature of knowledge and information itself is being transformed and many traditional assumptions are being challenged in an increasingly diverse world.

The ways in which people interact with each other across borders and how they share knowledge and express their opinions are changing fast. It is not for nothing that the political upheavals in Egypt this year have been labelled 'the Facebook Revolution'.

The sheer speed of these changes challenges how we teach as well as what we teach. What will the fields of medicine, IT, engineering, financial services, or the arts, look like a decade from now? Many of today's graduate employment options will be radically different and some may no longer exist.

On the other hand, there will be opportunities available to our pupils in careers that have not yet been invented. This is the world today's 12-year-olds are growing up in, and what is needed is a curriculum that prepares them for it, equipping them with the right qualities to carry them through senior school, university and beyond: qualities such as confidence, creativity and communication skills that will be with them through life.

This is the philosophy that underpins the Independent Curriculum (IC), commissioned in 2010 by Galore Park

Publishing and written by a large team of subject specialists under the direction of former deputy head and director of studies, Andrew Hammond. It is guided by a steering group of Heads, deputy heads and directors of studies chaired by John Brett, Headmaster of Old Buckenham Hall, and was successfully piloted by a group of schools last year.

The essence of the IC is twofold. First the belief that pupils do better at school if they are encouraged to discover knowledge for themselves, to scrutinise it, to apply it within creative, problem-solving situations and then debate, discuss and communicate it to others.

And, secondly, in acquiring, applying and communicating knowledge in this way, pupils develop qualities for life that will stand them in good stead long after the precise mark or grade that they obtain in an exam has been forgotten. Employers are looking for confidence, creativity, empathy, discernment, global awareness and resilience, and, more importantly, these qualities provide the key to happiness and wellbeing in adulthood.

When we wrote the IC, the authors had a very clear brief. They had to ensure that the corpus of knowledge that one would expect a pupil to receive from a first class prep school education was delivered with rigour and progression. They were then tasked with ensuring that this 'vertical' column of content was set out against a 'horizontal' set of activities that directed the pupil through the three-fold route of discovering, applying and communicating.

Then the whole scheme was audited against the ten qualities for life that we were seeking to promote: where we felt the activities did not sufficiently point to the development of these, we sent them back to be rewritten.

The resulting curriculum is still rooted in the subject specialism framework of prep schools, with full weight given not just to the core subjects of English, maths and science, or to Latin, French, geography, history and religious studies, but also to art, music, drama, IT and PSHE. In these latter subject areas, not currently examined in entrance exams such as Common Entrance, much creativity is to be found and where pupils are creating, they are truly growing as individuals.

Curriculum development is very much on the agenda of our schools today, and many in the prep school world are seeking to adopt curricular solutions that inspire all good teachers to equip children with the skills and enquiring minds to flourish through the opportunities and challenges that they will face as adults in a fast-evolving century. Of course, they will still need to pass exams, but it is our hope that they will also retain the joys and wonder of childhood into their adult years. 'So be it when I shall grow old or let me die!'

Nick Oulton is a former classics teacher. He set up Galore Park Publishing in 1998 from his garage and it has since grown to become the leading publisher of school textbooks and educational resources for independent schools. For more information about the Independent Curriculum, visit www.i-curriculum.com

Whatever happened to the lower sixth?

Ed Elliott wonders where a whole year group has gone

Those of us who grew up in the days of the linear A level will remember the lower sixth fondly as a time for wider reading, sport, socialising, leadership challenges – just about anything apart from day in day out, nose to the grindstone, academic study. Even allowing for some dewy eyed nostalgia, the experience of today's lower sixth formers is very different.

As most sixth formers study four subjects to AS and three to A2, lower sixth formers have effectively two terms to prepare for eight papers, whilst in the upper sixth work is spread over three terms (including the second half of the lower sixth summer term) for six papers. Even with an allowance for more challenging A2 papers, the sixth form curriculum is disproportionately front loaded with a heavy burden placed on the lower sixth.

In just two terms lower sixth students have to get to grips with four Advanced level specifications and perfect their examination technique. Now that AS exams are certificated, students know that every AS level mark matters, and AS paper scores of less than 95% could rule out university applications for top courses.

No wonder record numbers of anxious A level students are seeking psychological help to cope with examination pressure, and that in schools and colleges across the land no self-respecting lower sixth former wants to play sport, perform in a concert, or carry out prefect duties during the AS examination season, which runs from early May to mid June.

With increasing numbers of universities selecting by AS scores, the tyranny of lower sixth exams is squeezing the extracurricular soul out of the sixth form. Some schools and colleges have responded by switching to linear courses. Their decision makes good educational sense, but may disadvantage pupils. Who does a hard pressed admissions tutor select? The candidate who has achieved 96% in all their AS papers, or the candidate who is predicted to do very well. When push comes to shove, real marks will always be worth more than potential marks.

There is a simple solution. By switching the dates of AS and A level exams so that A levels are sat in May and AS levels in June, hard pressed lower sixth formers would gain half a term of extra study time. The sprint to AS could become less frantic, allowing students and staff time to leave the motorway of didactic specification-driven learning and explore the highways and byways of subject knowledge. An extra half term would release some of the psychological pressure on lower sixth formers, and give them more opportunity to participate in the extracurricular activities that are vital to a rounded education.

And what of the impacts on the upper sixth? Later AS exams in the lower sixth will probably lead to better student performance and fewer AS re-sits in the upper sixth. This is good news for pupils and staff and takes pressure off the final year. Whilst exam boards may see their retake income streams decline, schools could save money on their exam entry bills. If more sixth formers get it right first time, then, after one A2 module in January, there will just be one exam per subject in May.

Earlier A2 exams could mean earlier results – very helpful for the often discussed but never implemented post-qualification application to university, which would do much to widen social access. A longer summer break for the upper sixth would also create more opportunities for travel and paid work. The latter would be appreciated in a world of increasing student debt.

One simple switch, at no cost to the public purse, could make life better for hundreds or thousands of students and teachers. It sounds too good to be true...

Ed Elliot is Headmaster of The Perse School, Cambridge.



Utopia at Magdalen College School, Oxford.



Chris Ramsey

Fire? Get rid of that fire engine!

Chris Ramsey runs faulty syllogisms to earth in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Do fire-engines cause fires? When I first taught critical thinking to reluctant lower sixth form students in the dying days of the last century, this was a neat little question designed by the course book to make them think. Fire engines are always seen near fires: why might we not conclude that they must be the cause?

Of course what we were aiming at was some clear-headed rational thought: no, perhaps some different and more complex cause has brought about the fire, and the fire-engine is there *because of* that first cause and the resultant fire. Compare and contrast ‘smoking causes lung cancer’ and ‘television causes violent behaviour’. Or ‘selection to higher education causes discrimination, social injustice and social immobility’.

Selection in education may be a dirty word for some: it is also a complex business and, in the higher education market, as we have now got used to calling it, it has merited some spirited research and a whole raft of coalition policies to which the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is now firmly wedded. (As an aside, I still wonder by what logic higher education was wrenched from its natural home in Education and plonked foster-child like in Business. The message to educators may be intended to be clear, but it is also both clumsy and unfortunate.)

Still, ask the BIS department whatever you like, they will quote research at you and tell you that higher education institutions (HEIs) are not doing a good enough job of widening access, of selecting students with potential and of freeing up social mobility. They will quote in particular two major pieces of research into HEI selection and retention of students: the research undertaken by Tony Hoare of Bristol Universityⁱ and a study by Sir Peter Lampl’s Sutton Trust.ⁱⁱ

The former looked at 4305 Bristol undergraduates and concluded that independently educated students perform better at A level but less well at university exams, further extrapolating that by taking a disproportionate number of them, elite universities are ‘major impediments to social mobility’. The latter concluded that independently educated students are disproportionately represented in postgraduate education, even though ‘those educated at independent schools were 4% less likely to achieve a first’.

The higher education rhetoric that has resulted from this research features three major policy planks, three premises that underlie much of what we read and hear about higher education in 2011:

First, HEIs – and especially top, selecting universities such as the Russell Group universities, the 1994 group and so

forth – admit a disproportionately high number of candidates from independent schools, largely because these pupils are more professionally prepared for the application process, and their teachers push them to better results, as well as inflating their predicted grades, whereas in fact they have no more real potential than candidates from less high-performing schools.

Next, these independently educated students then perform disproportionately badly at university: if we could identify more students from lower-performing schools, they would do much better at university.

Ergo, widening participation is a good thing, and if we are to widen participation, we must set targets to do so, numerical targets grouping applicants by type of school, and asking (telling?) HEIs to increase the number of applicants they admit from certain ‘school types’.

Much has already and rightly been written about the nonsense of the final concluding premise. Applicants are individuals, not types, and deserve to be treated as such. Nor is any school I have ever come across identifiably a ‘type’: some independent schools are more ‘comprehensive’ both academically and socially than, say, London Oratory School.

More interestingly, though, few (and none apparently at BIS) question the first two premises, based as they are on academic and respectable research. It is those apparent truisms I challenge, because the research seems to be applying the same logic as that suggested in our fire conundrum – that is, a problem (social inequality, or lack of social mobility) is seen to be accompanied by another phenomenon (high achievement of certain schools) and promptly blamed on it.

Well first, is it true, as Hoare argues, that ‘those who attended independent schools performed better in their A levels but ... were less likely to get a first-class degree and more likely to get a lower-second’?ⁱⁱⁱ

Well, the difference turns out to be pretty negligible (a few percentage points above or below a median result) and since those studying medicine or related subjects have been excluded, one might argue that the ‘top elite’ are absent from the study. More alarmingly, given how keen the BIS department are to quote the research, government policy based on less than 1% of the total HE population must be questionable.

For, whilst some others agree with the Hoare view, others argue differently. The equally respectable research of Messrs McCrum, Brundin and Halsey^{iv} concludes that independent sector students have a ‘higher value-added score when attending university’ – they perform even *better* at finals (comparatively) than they did at A level. It would seem that it is far from ‘clear’ that students coming from ‘top schools’ are proportionally over-advantaged.

Nor is it true in fact that somehow the applications process advantages independently-educated students. True, UCAS has some concerns about its processes and is undertaking a review, but slightly to its own surprise it has calculated that last year fewer than 7% of predictions made by schools were under-predictions. Actually, most were correct and those that weren't were overwhelmingly optimistic and encouraging (from all sectors) (source: UCAS data).

No, it appears boringly to be the case that if you admit good students they will do well.

Except of course that we don't even have a clear idea as to what 'well' is. The good thing about Hoare's research is that it is specific to Bristol, where presumably one can compare degree classes ('outcomes'). But how do we compare a Bristol first with a Cambridge first? Or indeed a first class degree in a more vocational subject (say golf-course management) with a degree in classics or history? According to the Higher Education Policy Institute, we can't: such comparisons are 'neither feasible nor desirable.'

For myself, I don't believe that Tony Hoare's or indeed the Sutton Trust's research tells us anything for sure. But let's suppose for a moment that it did. Let's suppose that it did tell us that 'high flying' schools have slick, professional systems for getting their students propelled to the best universities, so that those students overshoot the mark, if anything, rather than ever falling short. Let's suppose that it did prove that students from such schools are 'over-represented' in elite universities.

Do we really think that it would then be a matter of giving them handicaps, stopping these schools from being so presumptuous as to advise their students so well? Surely we would be saying to less well-performing schools that they should learn some lessons and get their UCAS act together.

Or suppose it were true that students who had been so well-prepared to A level then underperform at university, then for me the question would not be 'How can we get other students, from less good schools, into HE, so that we can see if they do better?' No, the question – and I think we should ask it – is: 'why are they underperforming at university?'

Is Bristol asking itself why such apparently clever pupils are not after three years their top students? What are 'elite' schools doing that gets such great results out of pupils, and what are some elite universities not doing? I think I know the answer: 'high performing schools' offer robust, efficient and inspiring teaching. They mentor and coach pupils. They are accountable.

No, the truth is that if the fire is social immobility and the fire engine is the independent sector, the fire engine is not causing the fire. It is trying to put it out. Perhaps more fire engines are needed.

Chris Ramsey is the Headmaster of King's School, Chester.

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New extension for Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School's sports hall

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn, has opened a new extension to its sports hall comprising state-of-the-art changing rooms and showers, a large classroom/catering area and a sensory room.

This is thought to be the first instance of a partnership of this nature between an HMC school and the Football Foundation. A tri-partite arrangement has crystallised the good relations that have always existed between the school, the Football Foundation and a local club, Blackburn Community Sports Club, formerly known as Lammack Juniors.

The facility will not only be for QEGS pupils. There is considerable local community benefit (as well as good lettings opportunities!), not least to a local disabled group

who will now be able to use the excellent playing fields in a way that was previously very difficult due to the relative inaccessibility of our existing pavilion.

The building was formally opened by Gordon Taylor, chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association.



Transatlantic academe – the American Dream

Andrew Halls provides a reality check

In response to the uncertainties of the UK university system and the attraction of studying abroad, King's College School, Wimbledon, is hosting its second conference on applications to North American universities on Thursday, 29th September, 2011. Within two weeks of advertising the conference we had accepted applications from over a 100 delegates and, once again, have reached maximum capacity.

Why is there so much interest amongst our pupils in pursuing an *American* academic dream?

First, North American universities are now looking affordable, and secondly, educationists in this country know that somehow, slowly and with great pain, the UK higher educational picture will probably come to resemble that which we see across the Atlantic. Few will seriously consider Europe a role model – almost no European universities beyond the UK trouble the higher reaches of international league tables.

The very best UK universities are certainly the equal of the greatest American seats of learning and thus the best in the world. In all league tables, Cambridge and Oxford are at the very top along with Harvard and Yale. But anyone who has visited US universities, or researched them, or talked to their devoted and enthusiastic alumni, will know that what is remarkable about the USA is just how many astonishingly good universities there are.

They are richly endowed, they have facilities that most of our universities can only dream of, and they pay their academics well. Not surprisingly they therefore have many outstanding teachers.

Their libraries are cherished and well-funded and their sports, music and drama facilities are a painful reminder to us in the UK that in America, at least, the 'whole man' is catered for – and celebrated.

Most important of all, of course, US universities are free to pursue the courses and the admissions policies that they believe in. The agonised discourse between our last two governments and our great universities – ranging from wheedling cajolement through subtle threat to the occasional declamatory outburst – is, in America, simply unimaginable.

Delegates for our conference, mostly Heads and senior teaching staff, are attending from schools throughout the UK and from as far afield as the Middle East to learn how they can support students and their families in this complicated and often unfamiliar application process.

Few UK schools will go to the lengths that American schools do to appoint full time representatives to guide students and families through this complicated minefield, which differs significantly from our own more familiar UCAS system. However, the best British schools are well aware that their parents, particularly those who are American citizens, expect them to have staff who are fully conversant with the US application system.



Andrew Halls



King's College School,
Wimbledon.

One of the reasons why we have also invited Canadian representatives to our conference is to illustrate that they not only have world class universities but that their entry procedures are familiar. Applicants from the UK will find it reassuring that the Canadian application system does not involve SAT testing and is similar to the UK UCAS system.

We have attracted some of the leading North American university admissions representatives to participate in a panel discussion chaired by distinguished broadcaster Sir Trevor McDonald. These include admissions staff from Yale, Harvard, Toronto, Brown, Swarthmore and Princeton.

The programme for the day will include presentations from Lisa Montgomery, one of the foremost UK-based advisors on US applications. She proved an immensely popular speaker when we held a similar event in 2009. Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of The Sutton Trust, is also

speaking. Sir Peter feels strongly, as I think do many headteachers, that the British emphasis on purely academic results means that UK higher education is in danger of losing something of its soul, not to mention neglecting the need to help prepare bright young men and women for life in the world beyond academia.

Following the day's programme, the late afternoon and early evening will involve a tour of university stands manned by the panellists and other universities and representatives of organisations. Here parents and students will have the opportunity to seek answers to specific enquiries about entrance requirements, scholarships and costs. The Fulbright organisation will also be represented to explain how they can help applicants from the UK.

There is little doubt: for a growing number of talented British students, the American Dream is going to become a reality.

Andrew Halls has been Head Master of KCS Wimbledon since 2008.



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Shine Dinner.

Graduation dinner for SHINE pupils

Forty-one pupils from five Bolton primary schools and their proud parents enjoyed a 'graduation dinner' at Bolton School to celebrate the completion of the SHINE: Serious Fun on Saturdays programme.

The Year 5 girls and boys have attended Saturday morning sessions at the school since early November, enjoying a mix of traditional subjects (geography, history and the sciences) as well as more unusual offerings (Russian, martial arts, ceramics and Japanese). They also enjoyed field trips to the National Space Centre in Leicester and a geography field trip to Rivington Pike.

All the activities were firmly focused on pupil enjoyment and participation, whilst stretching and inspiring their young minds. Sessions were aimed at motivated and able pupils who had shown a high level of academic engagement or were perhaps of limited means and who would benefit from furthering their educational development by attending the course.

Pupils' work was on display on the night and included giant totem poles, CDs of carols sung in French, ceramic pots and DVDs. The evening was very well attended by parents and pupils and also included the Heads and teachers from Bolton School and sixth form students. A buffet supper preceded the awarding of certificates of merit.

Protecting whose freedoms?

Are there problems with the Vetting and Barring Scheme Review?

This article highlights the concerns of the independent child protection charity, SAFEchild, which works at the grass roots of promoting safeguarding in the independent, voluntary, community, education, health and leisure sectors. An umbrella group for the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau), the charity has vast experience in assisting with the risk assessment of positive CRB disclosure returns, including those who are listed against the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) barred lists; and also making referrals to the ISA.

The charity is extremely concerned that in its current format, the Protection of Freedoms Bill will expose children, young people and vulnerable adults to unacceptable and increased risk from dangerous individuals. There are significant numbers of people who will maximise the weaknesses of the proposed scaling back of vetting and barring to access the most vulnerable members of our society.

The present vetting and barring system, with its current flaws, is being further watered down, leaving many more vulnerable children and adults at risk from some very clever offenders who will manipulate the system even more determinedly to exercise their abusive behaviour. With an unsatisfactory legacy from the previous government, the charity did hope that the Coalition would make the whole system easier to understand and access.

The charity agrees that the system needs to be manageable and proportionate, but experience suggests that people who could not get work within the statutory sectors, such as education or social care, may find opportunities for contact with children in the voluntary and sports sectors where they perceive vetting to be weaker and less robust.

The charity's return of the positive disclosures rate within the voluntary sector sits at some 4% of all offences, with one or two people per thousand being dangerous to children. Within the

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Thank you, St Peter's

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (known as Guide Dogs), hosted a thank-you tea party for 30 volunteers at St Peter's School, as part of their Volunteers Week.

Year 9 and 10 pupils from St Peter's Community Action Team assisted with the tea and looked after the dogs and puppies. The pupils are highly committed to volunteering and many go on to receive V Awards, representing over a 100 hours of voluntary work.

Volunteers arrived with a selection of dogs – long serving guide dogs, dogs in training and hearing dogs, including Olly, who gave a demonstration of how he would help in the home. David Spencer, head of mathematics at the school, also entertained the volunteers on the piano with a canine themed medley of music.

"Our amazing Guide Dog volunteers carry out around 12,500 activities for the organisation," said Jo Sullivan, head of volunteering at Guide Dogs. "Without volunteers, Guide Dogs would not be able to successfully run the organisation as we do today. We estimate that our volunteers contribute around £28 million worth of work per year. There are around 50 different volunteering roles available at Guide Dogs, every single one of which is important to the organisation.

"Anyone thinking about volunteering for Guide Dogs should check out the website or email volunteer@guidedogs.org.uk or contact our national volunteering office on 0845 371 7771."



Protecting whose freedoms?



leisure and holiday sector these figures rise to 10% for positive disclosures, with four or five per thousand being dangerous. In these and other sectors the removal of barred list checking, the introduction of a basic check and 'portability' will put far more children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk.

Portability or transfer of CRB checks may not ever really be possible due to the existing systems for sharing information and also because the relevant police intelligence may be released against different criteria. For example, the information released for a voluntary youth worker in a local youth club may be very different from that for a host for a foreign student exchange scheme.

In the case of the latter it is vital that other significant adults within the household are checked. If portability does happen, there needs to be a far more detailed and robust system as well as much more education of the public.

To understand the severity of risk, the charity undertook a data analysis from a random sample of 1000 CRB disclosures returned from 1st March, 2011. Within that sample there were 194 general convictions, 54 cautions, warnings and reprimands, 7 battery convictions, 25 assaults, 2 sexual offences, 3 firearms offences, 3 individuals on the ISA barred lists and 4 with additional information from Chief Police Officers.

The police intelligence on enhanced CRBs is vital in cases where there are numerous but unproven allegations made against an individual. The charity recently supported an organisation in a case involving a security officer registered with the Security Industry Authority (SIA). His enhanced CRB detailed 24 allegations and showed that he had been sacked from various reputable organisations, including a hospital. The charity made a successful ISA referral in this case. He had gained his SIA badge with a standard CRB check which did not show any of this information.

From 2012 it will not be possible to check the barred list and such an individual will go undetected in any 'controlled' activity and most voluntary work where checks may not be needed. The strategy meeting concluded that 'he was a most dangerous sexual predator and it was essential that information from this meeting was shared with all appropriate agencies'.

Part of the argument in favour of scaling back checks is to avoid people being excluded from work forces unnecessarily. Many of the best youth workers who have some criminal history are able to engage and work very successfully with some of our most vulnerable young people. With more widespread education, managers will be more able to assess patterns of offending and better placed to manage risk.

Extreme caution will be necessary should the CRB and VBS system be scaled down. 'Controlled' activity CRB checks will not show inclusion on the barred lists or any other information currently shown on an enhanced CRB check. The implications of this are very significant for sectors such as education where recruitment has been very carefully scrutinised for a number of years.

Schools need to be aware that although the recruitment of teaching staff will remain very secure, the recruitment of other staff will be less so. Vetting for posts such as caretakers and support assistants will be very basic, have no additional information and will not include checks against the barred list. Some volunteers, such as parent helpers and governors, may not even need checking. Education providers will need to review their recruitment systems to mitigate the risk of unwittingly

employing a barred or dangerous person. The charity considers this to be almost impossible without comprehensive checking and, at the time of writing (summer 2011), is actively lobbying government to reconsider these plans.

The dangers posed by devious people who want to be near children for the wrong reasons must never be forgotten and the scheme must continue to include volunteers and the voluntary sector in particular. There must be a sensible balance between 'scaling' back and rigorous checking since predators will continue to seek any ways by which they can get close to children.

Rosie Carter is the CEO of SAFEchild.

Please see www.safechild.co.uk for further information about the charity. SAFEchild supports a wide range of organisations and sectors in the management of their safeguarding arrangements including policies, procedures, training and CRB checks. We work closely with local statutory agencies including the police, social care services, education and in sectors including sports and voluntary/community groups.

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Sufficient unto the day

Miranda Green describes a way to help anxious teenagers navigate the news 'storm'

This is an extraordinary moment for news. At the start of the year we watched Egypt's uprising and felt hope and fear in the balance as the 'Arab spring' began. Then Japan's triple disaster, marked by conflicting reports and daily increasing human misery, shocked and scared us. Now the UK is engaged in a military intervention in Libya against a dictator vowing martyrdom and reprisals.

Meanwhile there's a complicated political situation and an increasingly bitter debate about the economy and public services here in the UK, with plenty of voices raised on the side of doom and gloom.

Any anxiety about the state of the world that we adults are feeling is likely to be multiplied several times over in young people: research shows teenagers find news incomprehensible and distressing in equal measure. Today's bombardment of constant updates online and on rolling broadcast news stations leaves them stressed, anxious and then repelled. They turn off or stop reading.

Sadly, many may already have decided to disengage from the Big Wide World and its terrors. But there are many practical things schools can do to help teenagers cope with the barrage of events and opinions in the media, and even to find a positive way of turning their natural curiosity into a lifelong habit of intelligent analysis and enjoyment of current affairs.

"There is a need to reassure children about the terrible combination of things we're seeing at the moment," says Nigel Richardson, former Headmaster of The Perse School in Cambridge and an expert in pastoral care. "We need to be watchful for the signs of anxiety because young people can suddenly and unexpectedly be caught out by their own emotions."

The mother of two young boys tells me she is relieved when they get away from relatives' houses where the television is always on. The younger, who's about to move to secondary school, gets very worried by disaster stories 'in case something happens to people he loves'. But the older has come through an anxious period during his GCSEs to discover an active interest in politics, partly because he has been encouraged to discuss what intrigued or worried him.

This 'journey' is key to understanding teenage reactions to news. Contrary to assumptions about a general apathy among the young, research shows that teenagers do want to understand the events unfolding in the world around them. In fact, surveys both here and in the US show they yearn for in-depth information and reporting. But there's a dual problem.

First, teenagers feeling their way towards life as an independent adult are unusually sensitive to suggestions that the world is dangerous.

Secondly, the mainstream media is difficult for young people, who have not developed the same news consumption habits as older generations. They jump about until something, usually online, 'catches their eye', but often news just becomes wallpaper.

A group of American academics at Northwestern University, researching how teenagers digest the news, reported in January 2008 that young people feel 'hopeless and powerless' when they read or hear about crises at home and abroad. 'For teens, news is stressful and reminds them of the peril in the world,' their report says.

I well remember having sleepless nights in the 1980s about what I and my friends felt sure was an imminent and unavoidable nuclear war: we all joined youth CND out of sheer panic about being wiped out. For his part, Nigel Richardson remembers sitting in class during the Cuban missile crisis and wondering if he and the school would still be there the next day.

These days, parents say that younger teenagers tend to come home sobbing about climate change – but if we're not careful it could now be nuclear power and the turmoil in the Middle East as well. So what can we do?

These days, media saturation has turned suggestions that the world might be perilous into a constant, deafening roar. "The foreign correspondents are heroic, but for children it's just the same disaster being played out repeatedly," says Dr Richardson. "Schools should emphasise to parents to avoid 24 hour news being on hour after hour."

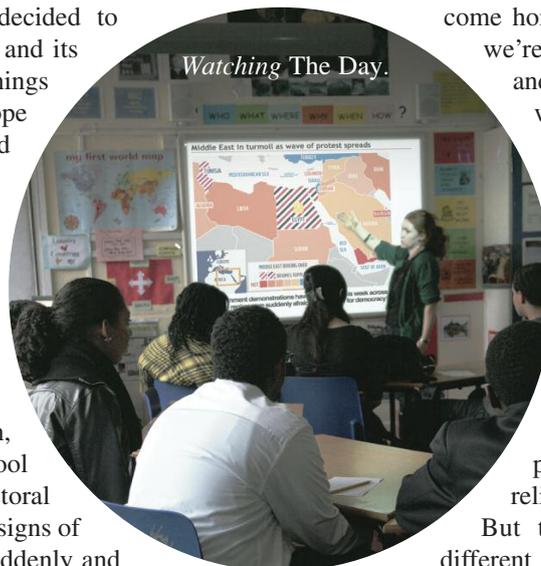
The US researchers recommend that parents and schools point teenagers towards reliable and easily digestible news sources.

But these news sources have to provide a different sort of news analysis specifically for a teenage mindset offering good sources of information and understanding, and a springboard for debate and action 'to diminish the negative associations teens have with news and to lift their feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness'.

Being encouraged to research the sources of anxiety and write about their feelings of peril also helps, as does finding out how to take positive action. At *The Day*, we try not to assume any prior knowledge of a topic, and provide a background Q&A, debating topics and follow-up activities on each story.

Crucially, it's important not to try to shield your teenager too much. Vicky Tuck, Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, says 9/11 was a turning point for her, realising that the school had to be led calmly through reactions to crises. After the Japanese earthquake, she brought the school together to talk about it, then to raise money for charity – a great way of feeling useful.

She also approves of teachers using news media in class in a responsible way. "One of the purposes of education is to enable people to cope with uncertainty, doubt and risk, but to do that in



a supportive way. So you have to make sure they understand what's going on."

And there's a valuable dividend. Because a teenager is on such a dramatic journey of self-discovery, being able to understand, digest and debate the news can bring feelings of pride to counteract their anxiety and become part of a new, news-aware 'persona'. Some of the pupils in the US study even enjoyed standing out from the crowd by becoming the 'go to' guy on what's in the news.

As a journalist who has enjoyed a fascinating career in both politics and media, I would argue that this burgeoning sense of oneself as an active participant in the great global conversation should be cultivated in any teenager who shows signs of sensitivity to or interest in the news.

Who knows? Given the right sort of encouragement, that particularly argumentative and opinionated rebel in the back row could be a future prime minister or media magnate.

Miranda Green is editor of www.theday.co.uk, a new daily online news service for secondary schools, and a former education correspondent at the Financial Times.

Miranda Green of The Day.



The same difference

Felicity Lusk considers the qualities needed of a Head



Felicity Lusk and Abingdon pupils.

When the governors of Abingdon appointed Felicity Lusk as Head, she became the first woman in that post in the school's 750 year history. It is, perhaps, surprising that there are still relatively few women leading HMC schools, since women have played a significant role in government, the workforce, religion and education for many years.

Are there gender specific qualities required in headship and is there any reason why women should run girls' schools and men boys' schools? If so, where should the governors of co-ed schools look? Whatever the answers to these questions, it is generally agreed that there are differences in the ways girls and boys learn and that there are discernible gender-related differences of methodology in single sex schools.

But are the skills required for successful school leadership any different? Now a year into her post, Felicity Lusk considers whether running a boys' school really is any different from its female equivalent.

After a year at Abingdon, and with the caveat that I am still learning, I can confidently say that the principles that apply to running a successful girls' school are exactly the same as those needed to run a successful boys' school, or a coeducational school for that matter. Characters of schools can be very different, but the road to a school's success follows the same route.

A school exists to educate children to fulfil their potential and running a successful school is all about making this happen for every pupil. Of course girls and boys differ – thankfully, otherwise the world would be a very dull place – but in the same way as good leadership is not gender specific, neither is a child's ability to respond to a well-managed learning environment that has the pupils' best interests at its heart and which provides opportunities for a stimulating, creative and challenging education.

The same difference

The key to getting a school to perform above its weight, to achieve and to add value, is communication – communication with staff and governors, pupils and parents. A Head can have an exceptional vision for a school, but if he or she cannot communicate this vision, then the school is going nowhere. You need to have your staff and governors supporting you, and this will not happen unless they share your vision, are enthusiastic about the future and have agreed the best way to get to where you want to be.

Giving your pupils a voice is crucial: you can learn a lot from them and they are the best ambassadors for any school. A successful school will be presenting opportunities, broadening horizons and adding value, as every prospectus says, ‘getting the best out of its pupils’. They will not all be world leaders, literary giants, international sport stars or concert pianists, but, if your pupils are happy at school, then they will utilise opportunities and therefore make the most of their ability.

A school needs to inspire its pupils, who will then talk positively about their experience and the return is priceless: success breeds success. However, you need to make sure that the school is listening to its pupils, hearing what is being said, good and bad. One of the first things I did at Abingdon was to introduce a school council, run by the boys for the boys, to discuss issues important to them and to feed back to staff.

These issues are more than just what’s on the lunch menu; given the opportunity these intelligent young men have a lot to offer. At my previous school, GDST’s Oxford High, the school council has been immensely successful and introducing it at Abingdon has already begun to reap benefits.

Families have made a huge investment in your school – and I am not referring to fees, although they are no small consideration – but they are trusting you to make the best of their child’s future.

That is an enormous commitment and they have every right to be kept informed of the progress. You not only need to have their support but you need to deal efficiently with their complaints. Parents of boys or girls have similar issues with their school and they are resolved in exactly the same way – through communication.

It is not always easy. In this electronic era a parent may fire off an email in haste and with little thought, demanding an instant reply and an immediate resolution of a problem. These can be testing times. I would advise everyone communicating by email to stop and think a while and not to act in anger. Decide what you want to say and remember that a face-to-face chat will often resolve an issue far more effectively than an angry email.

But it is vital that parents can communicate easily with a school, that channels are in place and that they know who to go to with a query. On arrival at Abingdon, I consulted with boys, parents and staff in an extensive survey and I repeatedly return to its findings. A school community will not want to be surveyed on a regular basis, but they do need to know that they will be listened to and informed on relevant subjects. They need a forum.

A Head cannot expect to please everybody all the time and must not be afraid to take tough decisions. A good school needs to be led, and, like any chief executive, a Head will occasionally have to make unpopular choices. My overriding proviso in a decision making process is, ‘is this best for the students?’ Whether they are girls or boys, this should be at the core of any Head’s thinking. Being a Head is a lonely job and not one whose chief purpose is to make friends, but good working relationships are a must. A Head taking up a position at a new school, whether successful or failing, has to make the best of what he or she inherits, building on the institution’s strengths and empowering staff to take their roles further.

Common to all successful schools, single sex or co-ed, is the determination to challenge the *status quo*. No good school stands still. Complacency is limiting and risky. A school should be continuously looking around, not only at what competitors are doing, but also at the whole environment, the economy, government and politics, industry trends and world markets. These all have a bearing on a school’s future. The ability to react and respond including, if necessary, changing tack, separates the leading schools from the also-rans.

Felicity Lusk has been Head of Abingdon School since September 2010.



The Abingdon School VIII, recent winners of The Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley.



Ian Power

Pay more for longer for less

Ian Power looks at the great pensions' conundrum

At the time of writing, there are unprecedented and unimagined moves afoot in both the maintained and independent sectors. Can it be true that previously

moderate teachers' unions are balloting for strike action and, even more bizarrely, if the rhetoric at their recent annual conferences is to be believed, that this single issue has brought together the NUT and ATL as, to say the least, surprising bedfellows? What is the issue that could forge such unlikely partnerships and leave teachers and headteachers at a loss as to what to do? The answer, quite simply, is pensions.

The 'P word' has generated considerable consternation and, in many cases, downright fear amongst colleagues up and down the country. Even before last summer's Hutton Report prompted the 'pay more for longer for less' headlines, an earlier review of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) had recommended significantly increased employee contributions and a move from the current *final salary* arrangements towards a much reduced *career average* scheme.

Alongside this, the government had already introduced the deceptively costly *pension accruals tax*, as well as proposing and implementing a sudden shift in indexing from RPI to the much lower CPI. These changes alone have left many new Heads facing five-figure tax bills, and many more teachers looking at a real terms reduction in pension benefits of more than 15%.

But, compared with the implications of Hutton, such concerns might pale into insignificance. Putting aside the headline-grabbing mantra of more for less for longer, the fine detail reveals a potentially devastating suggestion that public pensions should only be for public servants. This led one of the major independent school teacher unions to make an impassioned call to arms, imploring teachers in our schools to vote for industrial action and man the picket lines.

From their perspective, the implications were quite simple: independent school teachers had far more to lose than their state school counterparts, so what were they going to do about it? Such emotive rhetoric has certainly not gone unnoticed by common rooms up and down the country, with a steady flow of concerned colleagues making a bee-line to their Heads seeking assurances and advice.

In turn, Heads have had to face the reality of potential strike action, possible disillusionment amongst parents and governors, and the unknown effects of such actions on pupil retention and recruitment. What is more, from a pensions perspective, Heads themselves have just as much to lose as the teachers contemplating such drastic measures. These are uncharted waters indeed!

The summer is a welcome time for reflection, and once the immediate effects of promised strikes have been seen and managed, both Heads and teachers will perhaps be in a better position to judge the best way forward. Looking into the crystal ball, what will the new academic year bring on the pensions front? Before proceeding to some (hopefully) reasonably well-informed guesswork, it is worth considering where the TPS currently stands and what really is at stake for the staff in our schools.

The TPS is unusual as pension schemes go, not least because there is no pension fund as such to speak of. Its pensions are – and always have been – paid for out of current contributions, with any annual deficit made up by direct taxation if necessary, which makes it difficult to assess the true financial health of the scheme.

Even the most able actuaries might struggle to assess the size of contributions required and the appropriate related benefits that would ensure a self-funding future scheme. But this is what the government and the public are demanding.

Final salary pension schemes are a thing of the past for the private sector and it would be a brave government that contemplated retaining the TPS in its current form. Teachers gather little public sympathy as it is when it comes to industrial action, but surely to strike over a so-called 'gold-plated' pension scheme would be madness.

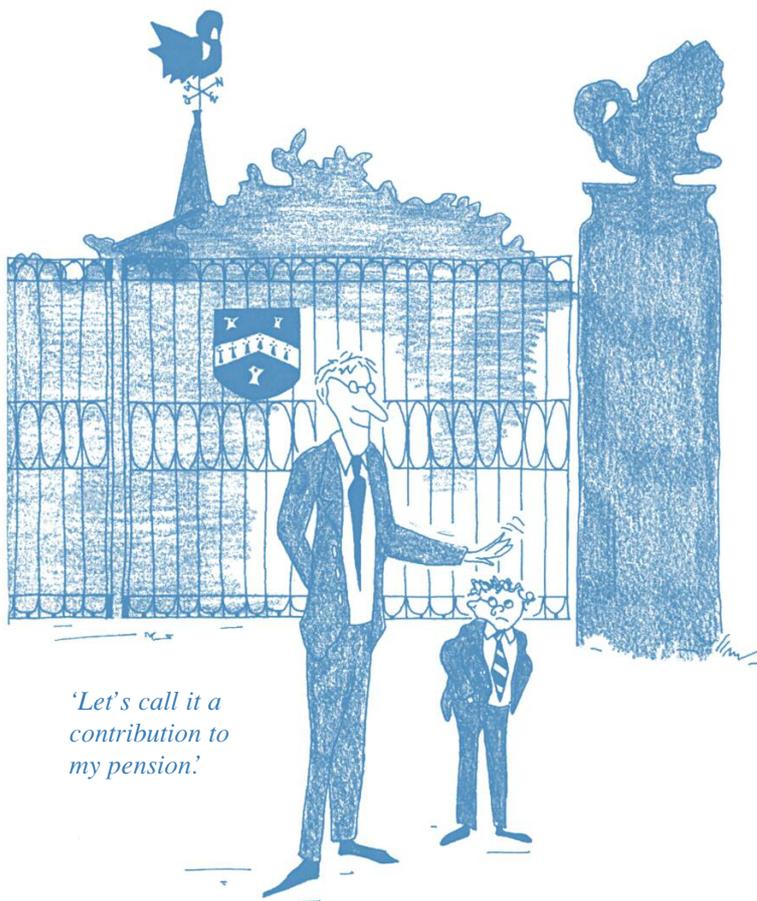
The difficulty for government, of course, is that without a pension pot to measure there is little way of knowing whether it is a pint or a quart! What is known, however, is that staff in the independent sector contribute over £300 million into the scheme every year.

Since this money goes directly to funding pensions and not into a nominal pension fund, it is difficult to see how any government could choose a path where such an income stream could literally be turned off overnight. It would seem a very high price to pay for what could only be seen as a political expedient.

Going back to Hutton for a moment, didn't he suggest that *public* pensions should only be for *public* servants? If the government wants some political 'wiggle room' then surely this is it, since Hutton has not defined what is meant by a *public* servant. One simple answer to the £300 million question is to state categorically that all teachers are public servants. This would certainly address the first issue raised by the unions and give staff in our schools some reassurance of having continued access to a future scheme.

Although this might well solve the immediate threat to independent school teachers' access to the scheme, there is even more to contemplate on the funding side. Looking a little closer at the various public pension schemes (for teachers, civil servants, the police *etc*) it is clear that, for the benefits accrued, members of the TPS make a disproportionate contribution to the public purse when compared with their fellow public servants.

The pension problem



Why is it that senior civil servants only contribute between 1.5% and 2.5% of their income into a pension scheme that gives them at least the same, and often higher, benefits? Compared with the 6.4%, soon to rise to 9.8%, paid in by the teachers, their individual contributions are almost risible. In reviewing the current scheme to make it pay its way, will the Treasury preserve this intrinsic inequality? If that is their plan, then perhaps the executives of the teachers' unions have a point.

So what sort of calculations might the government actuaries be considering? Under the current TPS arrangements a teacher earning £50,000 per annum would accrue a pension of £23,250 pa in 20 years' time, assuming an annual increase in salary of 3% per annum. By way of comparison, the same amount of money (soon to rise to 23.9% of income using the combined employee and employer contributions) invested in a personal pension for 20 years at an assumed growth rate of 5% per annum would buy an annuity of only £3,600 at current rates. Even a career averaged TPS pension would be £17,000 pa, and, with the additional lump sum and indexing, the TPS looks like an unbeatable deal.

Of course, it all depends on the projected growth rates and the length of time invested. Taking a 40-year period, with a growth rate of 10% and an annual 2% increase in salary, similar contributions would produce a TPS pension of £48,000 pa compared with a pension fund figure of £79,000 pa. In fact, in pension terms, the TPS breaks even with projected growth of around 8% in the pension fund over a 40-year period.

What is clear is that the government will struggle to win support for a public pension scheme that is predicated on an assumed 8% growth in the nominal pension fund and annuity rates of around 6%. All the indications are that annuity rates will

continue to fall and those who manage the TPS have no option but to respond to this. Such suggestions are no doubt controversial and certainly do not make good reading for the current generation of teachers. However, it does beg the question as to whether the present assumptions are shared by recent entrants to the profession as well.

This new generation of practitioners is facing a professional working life that will span more than 50 years. What is probably obvious to them, but not to the generations that worked towards a reliable pension after a predictable retirement date, is that pension incomes will be smaller and a part-time working life beyond nominal retirement much more likely. Who knows what pensionable life will look like in 2060 and beyond?

The uncomfortable truth is that the teachers of the current generation may find themselves fighting for a pension that is unrealistic for the next. A long series of strikes and continuing industrial action runs the risk of real damage to public sympathy and respect for the profession, with no guarantees of improved benefits and fiscal certainty. In the space of a few months of missed lessons and walkouts, all the good work of the past decade in promoting teaching as a worthy profession is very likely to be undone.

So is it really all doom and gloom? I sense not. For the current generation of teachers within ten years or so of retirement, Hutton will no doubt lock in their current pension benefits and protect them from much of the reality of collapsed pension schemes experienced by those in the private sector. At the same time, the new TPS will indeed need to be self-funding, but, with sound management and strong growth, the returns might not be that much lower than the current system.

But whatever happens, the benefits will be less and the returns lower than at present. That is the way the world now is and retirement in the 2050s and 2060s will indeed be different. But longer working lives may also be more varied and more rewarding working lives, which might be a price worth paying. Perhaps too many of the current generation of teachers have spent too long struggling in the classroom full-time, full-on, waiting for the golden sun of retirement, rather than looking objectively at the quality of their working lives at the chalk face.

Sensible government is likely to bring about a gradual change in the benefits that teachers receive in their retirement. It will mean that cries of 'unfair and unjust' will probably be rather hollow and that proposed industrial action will seem difficult to justify in hindsight.

What the profession really needs now is a mature dialogue with government and one that has at its heart the need for teaching and teachers to retain their professional integrity and worth in the eyes of the public. Without this it is all too likely that teachers will once again be seen as out of touch with the real world and locked into a public service dependency mentality that has had its day.

The question that really has to be answered is not whether teachers should pay more for longer for less, but how to start a meaningful and productive professional dialogue. One thing is for sure, the world of work and leisure has changed and we cannot take to barricades built from our now redundant retirement deckchairs and seek Canute-like to turn the tide. Instead, we need to accept that although 'less for more' does not seem that attractive, the days of the alternative are well and truly gone.

Ian Power is the membership secretary of HMC.

The food of love? And much, much more

Why music must be an integral part of senior school education

Music deserves as high a profile as other curricular or extra-curricular activities at senior school, but it does not always receive this and often pupils can view music as less 'cool' than other activities. Yet it is something that can be enjoyed by all and give pleasure throughout life.

Music should be positively encouraged as a school activity, not just as something individuals do. In the same way that senior drama productions will go to the Edinburgh Festival or the 1st XV will tour South Africa, the music fraternity needs to be exciting, to have goals and ambition. At Abingdon, tours of the Far East in 2006, Italy 2009 and the USA in 2011 did an enormous amount for promoting music within the school.

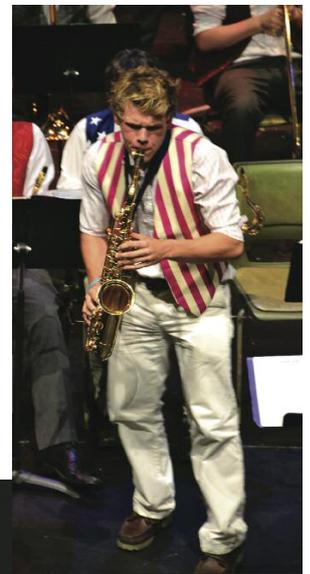
It raised the profile of our musicians; how 'cool' as a jazz musician is it to have played with the Big Band in New York or to be the lead violinist performing with the First Orchestra in front of a capacity audience in Washington National Cathedral? Having something to aim for raises the game and the practice you have to put in to get there and to ensure a great performance cannot fail to improve standards, inspire a willingness to work and excite an interest.

Music at senior school needs appreciation from all members of staff from the Head down. You require their support to facilitate music lessons, rehearsals and performances. Music has to have as high a priority as sport and drama and occasionally this can be hard to achieve, especially in a boys school, hence

the Head's support is paramount. The leader of the First Orchestra or the Big Band, or someone who wins a choral or organ scholarship, should be admired in a school in much the same way as the Captain of Boats or the Captain of the 1st XV. The way the school promotes music is what ensures that this is achieved. Opportunities to perform are vital, from lunchtime recitals in the school hall to full orchestras playing in high profile venues – music needs to be heard.

Many families do not have the time or the resources to develop young musicians and it is all about encouragement. Here is where a school can help. At Abingdon we encourage young musicians to try something new and we actively promote the less common instruments. The school also enables pupils to borrow instruments rather than putting their families to the expense of buying them, which can be prohibitive.

This policy has led to strength in depth in Abingdon's orchestras and ensembles, which currently have ten bassoonists, 15 French Horns and 12 double bass players



*Abingdon musicians:
symphony orchestra.
Right: Superband*

Whole school music

– very large numbers for these less common instruments. This opens up a fantastic repertoire for orchestras and ensembles with first, second, chamber, strings and lower school orchestras, plus a very impressive Jazz band and numerous other groups including brass and wind bands.

Music at senior school is about learning a life skill, and successful music teaching is as much about creating an enthusiasm and appreciation in the less talented as encouraging the gifted musician. At Abingdon, music is compulsory until the third year and then becomes an option. In addition all boys sing in the first and second years, which fosters an enjoyment that many boys would never contemplate if it were optional.

The success of this policy is very much in evidence at Abingdon's annual house singing competition, where the vast majority of boys take part and compete for the coveted title. Of the 860 boys, over half learn an instrument and there are 600 individual music lessons a week. For the majority, playing an instrument or singing will only ever be a hobby, but Abingdon does have more than its fair share of practising music alumnae and the range of professions they represent is a reflection of the diversity of the music encouraged at the school.

Johnny Greenwood, Radiohead's lead guitarist, was also a viola player at Abingdon and went on to be composer in residence for one of the BBC orchestras as well as writing successful film scores. Other alumnae include jazz professional Tom Richards; instrumentalists with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; the leader of the Edinburgh String Quartet, Jerome Finnis; Johnny Herford, who sang at the recent royal wedding; and other choristers such as Thomas Herford and Roderick Morris, who are training to be opera singers.

Abingdon attracts talented musicians from all backgrounds, with the help of scholarships and awards, and this reaps tremendous benefit in promoting music throughout the school. Recently one of our pianists progressed to the semi-finals of BBC Young Musician of the Year; we frequently have representatives in the National Youth Orchestra; and most years we will receive a number of organ or choral scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge.

These independent endorsements do much to boost music at senior school level and are vital in attracting musicians to the school. As with any subject, it's important to recognise these very talented individuals and to develop and challenge them.

Abingdon musicians: house song and, right, Christmas concert.



With music, this requires a range of specialist tuition and we run master classes for small groups of the most able musicians who receive tuition and advice before working together on a short performance.

The master classes are inspirational and pupils come on in leaps and bounds. Recently we have benefitted from Levon Chilingirian (violin); James Gilchrist (singing); Robert Max (cello); Paul Harris (woodwind); and David Owen-Norris (piano).

An important aspect of music at a senior level is to develop independent working and creativity. One method that I believe reaps huge benefits for pupils is music making in small chamber groups. At Abingdon we run a large programme of small ensembles for all instruments, strings, woodwind, brass and piano.

These ensembles receive weekly coaching from our teachers and, once well established, the pupils then take responsibility for their own learning, arranging their own rehearsals and discussing aspects of ensemble and interpretation. This encourages more self-reliance and responsibility, resulting in performances that they themselves can 'own', without the direction of a teaching professional.

Parental support is an enormous resource for successful music at senior school, not only in making up enthusiastic audiences but helping with everything from serving refreshments at performances to raising money to fund visiting musicians, new instruments and concert tours. At Abingdon we have a very successful Music Society committee with elected officers. This provides an opportunity for many of the interested and supportive parents to become closely involved with music at the school.

After 29 years of teaching music at senior level I firmly believe that you can achieve very high standards without having to be a specialist music school. It is essential to have a Head, teaching staff and families who are committed to music as part of an all-round offering. Through leadership, excellent teaching and wise use of resources it is possible to deliver the very best in a musical education alongside the equally important academic, sporting and other artistic components.

Michael Stinton is director of music at Abingdon School and conductor and musical director of the Thames Vale Youth Orchestra.



Eastbourne College and Glyndebourne announce new music partnership



Eastbourne College and Glyndebourne have formed a new partnership to promote a love of music throughout East Sussex and invest in musicians of the future.

The partnership has been formed in relation to The Birley Centre, a dynamic new hub at Eastbourne College that has been generously funded by friends, parents and alumni of the College as well as local people with an interest in music.

The Birley Centre will provide the College and the local community with a 'hi spec' arts facility, which will complete the cultural quarter of Eastbourne. Situated opposite the new Towner Gallery and Congress and Devonshire Park Theatres, it is ideally placed to serve the needs of both the town and the College.

Michael Birley, Headmaster of Eastbourne College from 1956 to 1970, successfully steered the College through the 'swinging '60s', a period when many traditional patterns of behaviour were being superseded by a more liberal approach. He abolished fagging and corporal punishment, tolerated long hair and introduced girls into the College.

He was also a figure of considerable influence amongst up and coming housemasters in other schools and he was clearly possessed of a deep and genuine sympathy for the young. In a letter quoted by J A Mangan in his book *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (1981), Michael Birley remarked sympathetically on the desire of adolescents to merge into a common background by adopting slovenly accents and worshipping commonplace music. His appointment of John Walker as director of music was of great significance for College music and an even greater benefit was conferred by the admission of girls. The Eastbourne Glyndebourne partnership would have delighted him!

The centre includes an acoustically-designed auditorium, seating up to 200, with a sprung floor ideal for recitals and concerts; a music technology suite and recording studio comprising a control room with separate vocal booth; a recording and percussion room; teaching and practice rooms; together with foyer and gallery space for exhibitions.

In the words of Simon Davies, Headmaster of Eastbourne College, "We are absolutely delighted to be working with a world-class establishment like Glyndebourne investing in the musicians of the future and helping to develop an appreciation of, and love for, music in all its many forms. The Birley Centre will provide an inspirational facility for a wide range of College activities and a vibrant resource for the wider community to enjoy."

The New Generation Programme, launched by Glyndebourne in 2009, supports artists of the future by nurturing new talent and through audience development. The partnership between Glyndebourne and Eastbourne College is a perfect match of inspirational learning and artistic environments. The state-of-the-art facilities at The Birley Centre will make it a leading arts facility in East Sussex.

The Executive Chairman of Glyndebourne, Gus Christie, who will open the Birley Centre on 4th October, said "Glyndebourne are thrilled to be working with Eastbourne College as part of our New Generation Programme. Part of our mission is to enrich people's lives through opera and our involvement with The Birley Centre will further this aim. We may use the space for performances, rehearsals and community outreach projects, as well as for some inspiring new education work led by Glyndebourne's acclaimed education department."

Commemorating Thomas Wolsey, Ipswich's greatest son

John Blatchly, chairman of patrons, celebrates the completion of a long overdue Town and Gown Project

Thomas Wolsey was born in his father's tavern *cum* butcher's shop in St Mary's Elms parish in Ipswich in late 1470 or early 1471. His loyal Gentleman Usher, George Cavendish, another Suffolk man, wrote of his master:

And being but a child, he was very apt to learning; by means whereof his parents, *or his good friends and masters*, conveyed him to the University of Oxford, where he prospered so in learning that, as he told me in his own person, he was called the boy-bachelor, forasmuch as he was made Bachelor of Arts at fifteen years of age...

Those *italics* are mine, for his parents were unlikely to have been able to pay for his education. His father, Robert Wulcy, from Stowmarket and not a freeman, was regularly fined for trading in the town and for contravening the bye-laws and customs of the town. His mother Joan's brother, Edmund Daundy, however, was a wealthy and successful merchant, five times bailiff and twice MP for Ipswich. Daundy and the grammar school master John Squyer doubtless prepared and sent Thomas to Magdalen College, Oxford.

After his long and distinguished public career, when for 14 years he was *Alter Rex*, running church and state for Henry VIII, his fall was as rapid as his rise had been meteoric. Just as King

Henry featured in the nursery rhyme *I had a little nut tree*, so Wolsey appeared as *Old Mother Hubbard* when he failed to find his dog the King the bone of divorce from that same King of Spain's daughter in the cupboard of the Catholic Church.

Wolsey had planned his legacy in Ipswich, a place he rarely visited but never forgot during his hectic working years: a college school, which absorbed the grammar school and its endowments, twinned with a college at Oxford. Both were flourishing before his death, but while the king was prepared to take over Wolsey's Cardinal College of Mary in Oxford (now Christ Church), he ordered the demolition of the Ipswich establishment. Useful materials were sent to London by water to enlarge another of Wolsey's grand designs, York Place, to become the Royal Palace of Whitehall.

Few tears were shed and fewer good words written about the cardinal who had offended two queens, and many nobles were delighted that they no longer had to do the bidding of a butcher's son.

In October 2009, 500 years after his rise under the new young King Henry VIII began, the project to provide a suitable piece of



Thomas Wolsey, by David Annand.

public art to commemorate Thomas Wolsey was launched in St Peter's, the church that had served as the college chapel from 1528-30. The borough chief executive, James Hehir OBE, who undertook the fundraising if I managed the rest, died sadly young, shortly thereafter.

In December 2009, the patrons interviewed seven shortlisted artists from the 57 who applied worldwide, and chose David Annand of Fife, who offered several ideas that he could develop and would discuss as the project progressed. In April 2010 a grander launch was held in St Lawrence Church (whose ring of five 'Wolsey's bells' is the oldest in Christendom) and, after a very successful Wolsey Dinner at Ipswich School in October that year and receipt of a Section 106 grant in April 2011, the task was complete.

David Annand, who came to the main launch and the dinner, has made many Ipswich friends, and the foundry, Powderhall Bronze of Edinburgh, started taking casts of the full size statue at the end of April. The unveiling, planned for noon on Charter Day, 29 June 2011, was a homely affair with the mayor, the diocesan bishop, the honorary recorder and the chairman of the patrons each taking a corner of the cloth.

Wolsey is 10% larger than lifesize, seated and teaching, for it is Wolsey the pupil and the enlightened teacher who is here commemorated. His published *Rudimenta Grammatices*, 'for use not only in Ipswich School but in all the schools in England', has wise and far-sighted words for those who teach:

Pleasure is to mingle with study, that the child may think learning rather an amusement than a toil. Tender youth is to suffer neither severe thrashings nor sour and threatening looks, nor any kind of tyranny, for by such usage the fire of genius is either extinguished or in great measure damped.

His ideas must reflect his own youthful experience and his brief time as Master of Magdalen College School. As R S Stanier wrote in *Magdalen School* (Blackwell, 1958), 'the hand of the skilled schoolmaster shows itself at various points in Wolsey's recommendations. He recognises the temptation to concentrate on the more advanced boys – "least of all is it right to rob this age – the First Form – of your full attention". Accuracy and neatness in writing out exercises ... reading Virgil *voce bene sonore* ... the advantage of learning by heart last thing at night ... all are noted and commended to the masters.'

Between them, William Waynflete's two Oxford foundations, Magdalen College and Magdalen School, played a significant part in the promotion of the 'new learning' and just as Wolsey drank at this stream, so did Thomas More and William Tyndale. It is therefore not surprising that Wolsey wished to found a similar twin-site centre of educational excellence and one, at that, which would eclipse the achievement of those Bishops of Winchester, Wykeham and Waynflete.

Wolsey may, like Humpty Dumpty, have had a great fall, but his architectural legacy is to be seen at Hampton Court and Christ Church, Oxford. More lasting and more worthwhile is his legacy as a teacher and David Annand's statue will remind generations to come of this, the finest monument to Ipswich's greatest son.

John Blatchly was Headmaster of Ipswich School and is a former Treasurer of HMC.

HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Tom Wheare at postmaster@dunbry.plus.com. Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Bishop's Stortford College linguists come top

Four pupils in the German department at Bishop's Stortford College have scooped all the top prizes in a nationwide language competition.

Organised by the Association for Language Learning (ALL) in conjunction with FILMCLUB's 'Film Journeys' season, the aim was to promote language learning and to raise awareness of foreign language films. The task was to write an essay reviewing one of the German films they had seen as part of their cultural and language enrichment programme.

The sixth form linguists won the first, second and third prizes in the German section. The first prize was awarded to Matthew Robinson, who has been accepted for a place at Somerville College, Oxford, to read German and French next year, for his essay about the film *Napola*. His essay has been published on the FILMCLUB and ALL websites.

Roisin Devine and Marija Krasnopjorova, both currently in the lower sixth, were joint winners of the second prize. The third prize went to Jessica Mackenzie, who plans to study German next year at Durham University.

"We were thrilled to learn that our pupils had done so well," said head of German Hazel Bailey. "That the standard of entries was apparently extremely high was an added accolade. It is a shining example of our German department's mantra: *Für uns das Beste, oder nichts!*"

From left to right are Marija Krasnopjorova, Matthew Robinson, Jessica Mackenzie and Roisin Devine.



Tragic Queen's relics reunited

Loretto College stages a major event in Scottish history

The eventful life and celebrated death of Mary, Queen of Scots, was a set-piece in the history syllabus at primary and prep schools until the current vogue for 'relevance' dislodged it in favour of the stories of Helen Keller and Marie Curie.

Fotheringhay and the escape from Leven Castle are indelibly etched in the memory and those of us who studied the Tudors and Stuarts in secondary school will recall the theory that James I's fear of daggers stemmed from pre-natal shock as his pregnant mother saw her secretary Rizzio stabbed to death in front of her eyes.

Mary spent much of her life imprisoned in England, being claimed by almost as many venues as Charles II had 'Royal Oaks', and she was surrounded by a galaxy of conspirators and secret service agents whose dirty tricks would try the imagination of the most inventive of contemporary thriller-writers. This tragic Queen was a popular subject for Victorian history painters and a heroine of plays, novels, films and operas. She remains a cynosure for historians, nationalists and romantics and her relics are as highly treasured as they are rare.

Two of these precious artefacts are to be found in Britain. One is *The Book of Hours*. The slender volume, bound in red silk velvet, was carried by Mary, its words providing solace and comfort as she made her way to be beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle in Northamptonshire in 1587, after being accused of plotting to assassinate Elizabeth I.

After her death, it is thought that her closest confidantes secretly took the book to France, before it came into the possession of the Society of Jesus, a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church.

Since then the Jesuits have kept the prayer book safe, its existence, let alone whereabouts, known only to a select few. After more than four centuries, however, the small, ornate book was put on display for one day only at Loretto School in Edinburgh, Scotland's oldest boarding school.

The book, depicted in several portraits of Mary, was originally made for Mary Tudor but passed to Mary, Queen of Scots. It has never been part of a major exhibition and can only be seen by appointment at Stonyhurst's library.

But, even more remarkably, the exhibition, held in the school's Pinkie House, reunited the book with the ornate mother-of-pearl crucifix Mary was also carrying before her execution, which makes up part of the collections at Abbotsford, the Borders home of Sir Walter Scott, and which was loaned by the Abbotsford Trust in Melrose. So, how did these two precious relics end up together in Scotland after 400 years?

Jonathan Hewat, director of external affairs at Loretto School, writes. 'It had long been a desire of mine to reunite these two extraordinary artefacts and, in particular, to see Queen Mary's *Book of Hours* in Scotland for the first time since 1587. These two poignant treasures represent real history, objects that bring history alive. It was fitting that the first to view these two artefacts together were school children – hundreds of them – from Loretto and beyond.'

Jonathan had worked for 12 years at Stonyhurst College, the Roman Catholic boarding school in Clitheroe, Lancashire, the

permanent home of the *Book of Hours*, which is owned by the British Province of the Society of Jesus. Jonathan had also been a tour guide at Abbotsford House in Melrose, the home of Sir Walter Scott, where the crucifix is on display.

'It was a momentous day in Scottish history. All the children had been studying Mary, Queen of Scots from textbooks, but learning history out of books is not quite the same as seeing the poignancy of these objects first-hand. To have a national broadsheet describe the occasion as "one of the most important events in Scottish history since the return of the Stone of Destiny to Scotland" made me smile. The real joy was the children's reaction to seeing these artefacts up close, their enthusiasm and genuine interest – is this not what it is all about?'

Jan Graffius, curator at Stonyhurst who travelled up to Musselburgh to deliver a lecture on the book, told *The Scotsman*: 'We think Elizabeth Curle, one of the two women who accompanied Mary to the scaffold, picked up the book, went to France and gave it to her nephew, who became a priest and went to the Scots College at Douai. Around 1640, Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, was canonised and there was a big celebration at the Scots College, and it's quite likely the book was given to the Jesuits as a gift. We don't know what exactly happened at the scaffold, but any relics or reminders of Mary were probably confiscated.'

It is poignant that the *Book of Hours* should be returned to Loretto School, which lies close to the site of the Battle of Carberry Hill. It was there, on 15 June 1567, that Mary surrendered to the Confederate Lords, bringing an end to her reign as Queen of Scots and paving the way for her eventual flight to England where she would meet her death on the orders of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I.

Jan Graffius delivered two lectures on the history of the artefacts, the first to the school children and the second to invited guests. The *Book of Hours* and the crucifix were also on display for members of the public to view. She said: 'The prayer book is an important piece of history and an object which is close to the hearts of many for historical, religious and patriotic reasons. To reunite the *Book of Hours* with the crucifix and to bring it to Scotland for the first time in hundreds of years will be a significant moment in history and one I am delighted to play a part in.'

Jason Dyer, chief executive of The Abbotsford Trust said: 'The crucifix reputed to have belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots is just one of hundreds of historically significant objects on display at Abbotsford. Sir Walter Scott was a great collector of items that he considered significant to the cultural heritage of Scotland.'

'The Abbotsford Trust aims to preserve, protect and improve Abbotsford and its surrounds for the benefit and enjoyment of the public and also aims to enhance knowledge and understanding about the life and works of Sir Walter Scott. The multi-million pound regeneration project we are currently undertaking will help to preserve objects such as this, which are vital in helping current and future generations understand the history and heritage of the Scottish nation.'

Coffee Shop Book Club

Can you teach a child to enjoy a book?

“How do I get my child to read, Miss Spence?”

This is the plea that rings in my ears from concerned parents at the end of every parents’ evening. Yet in lower school library lessons once a fortnight, I watch disheartened as I take the horses to the water, give them a reading list and try hard to make them drink up the books. Some students – the ones who read widely at home and who already enjoy reading – relish this chance to read in silence.

Some students will try to read but, after a couple of weeks, it becomes clear that they have been bringing the same book and have made very little progress. Sadly, some students see these lessons as a game: how little can they stare at the pages of the book they hastily borrowed on the way to the lesson and how much work can they do on their secret, silent code with their mates across the classroom.

We have done book swapping, a colourful suggestions wall in the classroom, watched clips from films of the books, filled in activity sheets on the books and listened to presentations from other class members on books they have read. Whilst all of the above methods are successful during the lesson, I began to wonder whether they were instilling pupils with the right attitude towards reading that they would be able to carry with them through senior school and beyond.

Do grown-ups fill in sheets asking them to redesign the front cover of books they have read? Do we, in fact, ever sit in groups of 25, in silence, reading different books whilst an authority figure sits at the front and ensures that we are concentrating? I wanted to change the face of reading lessons to mirror a realistic reading experience with the hope that the pastime would become interesting, rewarding and (dare I say it?) cool.

2011 is already proving to be a controversial year for the topic of reading in schools with Michael Gove’s statement that secondary school students should be reading 50 books a year and Ofsted’s report, *Excellence in English*, pinpointing reading as instrumental to pupils’ success. It is more important than ever that students are reading, but first they need to be taught how to read; not the technical, logistical pairing of words and meaning that is covered in primary school, but how to read for pleasure and how to persevere if the storyline seems initially uninspiring.

The BBC reported in May this year that boys do not have the reading stamina to get past the 100th page of a book and that many are put off much earlier than that. Reading lessons need to find a way to teach pupils how to get hooked by a book and to break down the teenage preconception that reading is not something the cool kids do.

Coffee Shop Book Club aims to do just that. The classroom is organised like a Coffee Shop – tables are arranged in groups with chairs around them. Pupils sit in friendship groups and can gather the chairs to the tables as they wish – they do not have to be in the regimented one chair per desk formation needed for written work.

With my Year 8 group, the entire class was given the same book (*The Garbage King* by Elizabeth Laird) but instead of reading alone in silence, the pupils were set a target of two



Esther Spence

chapters to be read by the end of the lesson and each group could decide how they were going to structure their 40 minutes.

Some chose to discuss the cover and blurb, read the first few pages together then discuss again before settling down to read the rest silently, whilst other groups read independently in five-page bursts with discussion in between. I circulated the groups and listened in on the discussions and, when all the groups were reading, I read as well.

The novelty of the first session was, undoubtedly, responsible for some of its success but I am delighted that the enthusiasm for the scheme has continued. The established routine is that we discuss Coffee Shop Book Club every Tuesday: one Tuesday they read and discuss in groups and the following Tuesday it becomes a starter activity with structured questions to prompt discussion of the reading they have done at home.

Each Tuesday the groups set their own home reading targets for the next week – most choose a chapter to read up to and some also choose a point they won’t read past to give themselves the freedom to read more if they wish. As a result of this independence, all groups are at different stages and, as it progresses, can be reading different books.

Indeed, if a particular pupil within a group wants to finish the book, they are given a new book to read but can still join in the Book Club discussions with their friends. What is most pleasing

Encouraging pupils to read

is that there is a buzz about the book and pupils are discussing it, without prompting, during lessons. It seems as though the lack of teacher intervention, the absence of formal control or silent conditions allows the pupils to take ownership of the book and the reading experience; the book is definitely *theirs*.

With the pressures of the GCSE courses, it is difficult for English teachers to spend much time discussing independent reading with Year 10 and 11 students, but Coffee Shop Book Club offers me the perfect opportunity. With my Year 10 GCSE class, I gave different books to each self-selected group (these included *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Roll of Thunder*, *Hear my Cry*) and let them set their own reading targets within the framework I set – they had to be half way through the books by half term.

Instead of a structured day each week, we discuss the books in lessons: during a lull in group work, as pupils are getting out their books at the start, as they pack away at the end. The aim with these students is obviously that they read more challenging books, that the good readers are subjected to different works of fiction and that they learn to discuss and enjoy texts.

Frank Cottrell Boyce said recently that you “can’t teach pleasure” and certainly trying to do so is the quickest way to diminish it. Forcing pupils to read in silence is, in my opinion, never going to entice students who don’t have a natural inclination to read. Reading lists are wonderful if they are tailored to individual students, but the environment of enforced silence and the connotations of control that the classroom situation unavoidably conjures is not going to instil a healthy,

natural reading instinct in students, especially those who are weaker or work averse.

The Coffee Shop Book Club experiment works because it creates a pupil-led environment where pupils teach their peers how to enjoy reading: in a friendship group, no child wants to be the slowest or the one who has given up. As a teacher, it works because I know that pupils are reading something challenging and, for the avid readers, something different from the things they read repeatedly at home – the *Twilight Saga*, *Harry Potter* and the *Cherub* series have not made it onto my list for that reason.

If we can instil a love of reading in pupils at a young age, they will have a wider vocabulary, more accurate spelling and a greater understanding of literary techniques, all of which will help them in their English and English literature GCSEs. But it surely goes deeper than that.

If students understand that reading can be enjoyable and communal they will thrive at university when a reading list is thrust before them and they have a week to produce an essay, or at work when books are swapped and your subsequent opinions silently judged in the office.

Even, perhaps more idealistically, in life, as they have a wider appreciation of the world through the books they have read and enjoyed. Boyce is correct: we cannot teach pupils to love a book but we can create the opportunity for them to explore and discover books in a way that makes the literature theirs and to watch as they take pleasure in that discovery.

Esther Spence teaches at Stockport Grammar School

War and Peace and USSR

Catherine Goddard explores ways of combating lexical nullity and syntactical bankruptcy

My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up-stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in the house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, the Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time.

Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*

Faced with the acronym USSR, the knee-jerk assumption of the vast majority would be that the letters stood for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or at least the more succinct Soviet Union. The lyrics of a certain song by The Beatles might also spring to mind: ‘Back in the USSR’ where ‘the Ukraine girls really knock me out’ and ‘the Moscow girls make me sing and shout’.

Few would interpret the four letters as Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading: a designated time within the school curriculum where pupils’ choice of reading material is relatively free and interruptions are kept to a minimum. A practice attributed to the American professor Lyman Hunt in the 1960s, USSR already had its place in many British schools, albeit in a less structured fashion.

So why do secondary English teachers now often find themselves having to fight to preserve curriculum time dedicated to the skill of sustained private reading? Clearly the increased breadth of subjects studied, and the mounting pressure on schools to produce record results at GCSE and A level, have led to teachers feeling the pinch on curriculum time. Yet why should this make private reading such an easy target?

An obvious answer would be that pupils can read independently at home, and that reading does not need to be ‘taught’. This, however, is a rather naive assumption with one of the most frequent concerns voiced by secondary school parents being that their child doesn’t read. And it is hardly surprising: in addition to homework demands and extracurricular activities, there are numerous seductive distractions such as television, computer games and social networking sites that inevitably lead to reading at home becoming a thing of the past.

This decline in private reading, acknowledged by Ofsted in their 2009 report, *English at the Crossroads*, and demonstrated by a National Literacy Trust research project published in October 2010, is surely an indicator that schools need to do their utmost to provide pupils with a protected period where sustained independent reading can take place.

It is perhaps understandable that the sight of a classroom filled with silent students and their English teacher, who has a passion for reading anyway, apparently gazing passively at a collection

Encouraging pupils to read



Johnson are equally pertinent: 'A man ought to read exactly as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good.'

Obviously students will require some guidance, but the opportunity to select books with which they can relate, whilst simultaneously exposing them to unfamiliar lives and places, promotes a healthy inner dialogue, enabling them to embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-realisation.

Furthermore, by having an assigned time within the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to see reading as an important activity, and one which all teachers should champion. The fact that a major survey from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2010 revealed that secondary pupils in the UK are falling behind their international counterparts in reading adds fuel to the fire: not only should USSR be incorporated into the curriculum, but it should also be treated

of unrelated books, is often viewed by non-subject specialists with some suspicion. And clearly an entire lesson spent this way could not be very convincingly sold as the best use of precious curriculum time. However, two things must be understood.

First, it is highly unlikely that any English teacher would be content simply to let their charges read a text without encouraging them to engage in some way, whether it be asking their pupils to be active readers by focusing on a particular character or literary technique, or getting them to share their experiences as readers through peer recommendations, for example.

As Edmund Burke intimated, 'reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting'. The reading time tends to be followed by some form of activity or discussion, encouraging pupils to become discriminating readers and minimising the negative impact of peer pressure with behaviour being standardised. This is particularly important for boys who are more likely to perceive keen readers as 'nerds'.

Secondly, USSR is a prerequisite for academic success across the board, and if pupils are not reading independently at home they need to be encouraged to do so at school. Research conducted by the NLT in 2010 found that 60% of those pupils surveyed who read every day were achieving above the expected levels for their age range, whilst just 5% of those who 'never' read were exceeding expectations.

As Jonathan Douglas, director of the charity, said, "The simple fact is that if children do not enjoy reading in school and do not read outside of the classroom, there will be an impact on their potential achievement both in literacy and across the curriculum."

And USSR works on so many levels, with choice being a key factor. Reading needs to be seen as a pleasurable activity, not a chore, and the voluntary reading of texts chosen by the pupil inevitably increases the likelihood that the experience will be enjoyable.

Paul Jennings, a children's author, suggests that 'there is no such thing as a reluctant reader. There are only readers for whom the right book has not been found.' The words of Samuel

seriously by all subject specialists. Indeed, as the Bullock Report (1975) stated, 'It is the responsibility of every teacher to develop the reading skills necessary for his own subject.'

Reading is not simply a matter for English teachers: literacy is a whole school issue and reading plays a fundamental role in improving literacy levels, having a knock-on effect on all aspects of communication. And with the current inevitable shift to a language of sound-bites, shaped by the digital age with the average text messenger sending the equivalent of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* nearly every five years, the ability to write eloquent, carefully crafted and sustained prose is being replaced by 'lexical nullity and syntactical bankruptcy', causing great concern for academics and employers alike.

With universities and companies having to teach their respective undergraduates and employees to write, the time has surely come for secondary teachers to acknowledge and promote the importance of sustained independent reading.

The Royal Literary Fund is certainly clear on the matter in their report on student writing in higher education: students 'read little, if at all, and so have no models of more subtle, searching or expressive writing to set beside their own.' If the home cannot be trusted to provide regular opportunities for USSR, the school must, and it is a battle worth fighting for.

Catherine Goddard is Head of English at Hampton School.

www.literacytrust.org.uk/news/2366 NLT 2010 NLT statistics

www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaigns-policy/media/3448 Jonathan Douglas

www.sla.org.uk/_v14/bib-help.php Paul Jennings

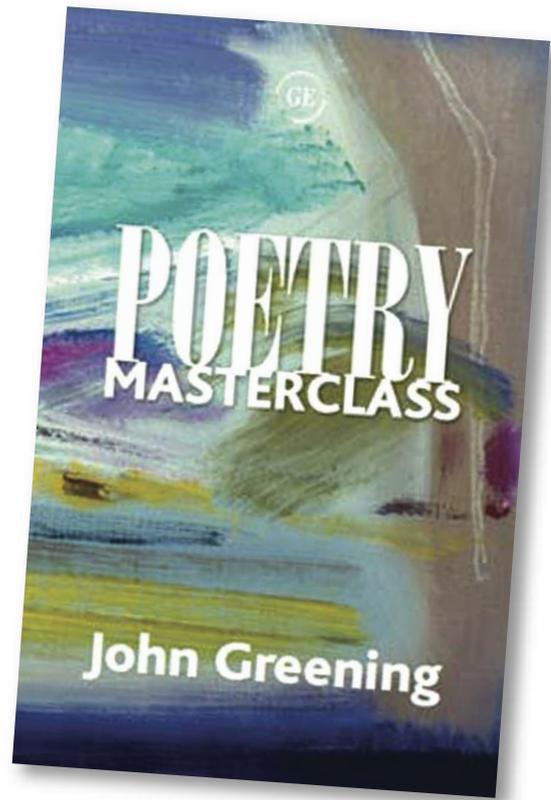
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www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/documents/launchtalk.pdf 'lexical nullity and syntactical bankruptcy' and students 'read little ... their own'

Mind your language

David Caddy reviews
 John Greening's
Poetry Masterclass
 Greenwich Exchange
 ISBN 978 10906075 58 3



The sheer volume of new books that attempt to deal with the state of contemporary poetry as a practice and field of study testifies to a crisis in the teaching of poetry. Part of the reason for this growing crisis is the way that poetry is taught and examined at secondary schools and beyond.

There is enormous disparity in approaches and interpretation of requirements and our examining boards are failing able students by restricting the range of poetics on offer and by not sufficiently utilising the canon. The narrow range of poetry on the syllabus of all examining boards is not a matter of multiculturalism but rather of the more substantial issue of the width and depth of close reading requirements.

The number of poems that offer simplistic and closed readings outweighing the number of more complex poems exacerbates this and there is a related, secondary issue of student and teacher finding relevance in the poems under review. There are, in fact, ample resources to allow both relevance and essential close reading.

Seventeenth century poetry, for example, offers a rich seam of diverse material for a world where religious controversy and concerns about identity, sexuality, the environment and land issues are relevant. To resolve the crisis there should be a considerably greater range of poetry on offer, which should be supported by study of context, approaches to the text and introduction to poetics through language.

The widening gulf that exists within poetry teaching at all levels can be explained in terms of an educational background that views poetry as something that moves towards and through the complex and multiple experience of language, with all its attendant discourses and histories, and that which views poetry as seemingly transparent expression.

John Greening's *Poetry Masterclass* aptly illustrates the situation that I have outlined. This is essentially a personal beginner's guide to the teaching and writing of poetry. It begins with a glossary of technical terms and verse forms that would have benefited from an editorial eye, especially with a view to completing some definitions.

The second and third parts concern reading and teaching a poem. Here the author deals well with the benefits of reading aloud and the importance of metre, but there is no mention of

practical criticism, language use, poetic effects or context. Although it is emphasised that a poem consists of language, this remains unexplored. The author seems concerned to avoid an over-intellectual approach and offers strong assumptions that are quite narrowly focused.

A limited and basic structure of further reading is provided which, perhaps intentionally, leaves much of the rich hinterland of alternative experiences and readings that make poetry such a joy to teach as a *terra incognita*. The teacher should be grasping the poetic raw material and, above all, exploring words, their usage, philology, etymology and meaning.

The handbook works well in terms of providing information with its lists of books and poems on the art of poetry, recommended poetry books and suggestions for how to start writing a poem. The exercises are useful and supported by examples, but the underlying belief that students should begin their writing exercises by taking the methods of other poems is limiting and removes an avenue of creative possibility. Students are capable of finding poems from alternative sources and surely that helps to bring excitement into the classroom.

The central part of the book consists of an exploration of form, linked with diction, metre and syntax. The use of examples and references for possible reading and writing is good. The author is on surer ground here and less idiosyncratic in approach. He is also to be commended for demonstrating form with examples of his poems.

On the other hand, the relative lack of attention to words is a serious absence and there is a narrow understanding of musicality throughout. Whole areas of contemporary poetry practice are ignored and there is no sustained criticism that includes both broad and close reading skills. Regular exercises

in close reading both sharpen and deepen accurate response to local texture and also feed into enhanced perception of larger-scale structure, producing better all-round readers.

These omissions are noticeable in an otherwise thoughtful essay on the seven virtues of a good poem, which is exemplary in terms of citing examples but not on how to focus reading. It is not so much what is said, although it is limiting in perspective and ambition, that causes disquiet, but what is omitted.

A short essay on the history of poetry in English confines itself to surface changes and lacks a linguistic context. Neither essay grasps or seeks to explain that poetic development occurs within language. This is crucial as it involves an appreciation that the self moves and functions within a multiplicity of languages. Reading skills involve wide-ranging focus and perception based on asking questions of the text under review.

Contextualisation as an object of study implicit in reading is given scant attention. The recommended reading list is limited. It omits diverse approaches to language and avoids language use that is complex or tricky and requires some thinking. It is the thinking that we need to allow a text to be read within a series of possible contexts. The problem for the student reader is how to find the most plausible context and interpretation.

Several universities are now studying a much wider poetics and so this gap between poetry that is written through language, as opposed to a narrow range of experience and language use, will continue to disadvantage students that have not been introduced to more linguistically and socially challenging poetry at secondary level. Students need to be properly equipped to move beyond the narrow range of language and experience on offer here to where the sheer exuberance of possibility and multiplicity forces the reader into new worlds of thought, interpretation and critical judgement.

Reading poems requires an introduction to the concept of context and to all possible nuances and perceptions in practical criticism. Students and teachers who have read John Greening's *Poetry Masterclass* will have been prepared to move on to the more developed exploration of the possibilities of poetry to be found in parts of Ian Brinton's *Contemporary Poetry: Poets and Poetry since 1990* (Cambridge 2009), Ruth Padel's *The Poem and The Journey* (Vintage 2008) and Peter Robinson's *Talk About Poetry: Conversations on the Art* (Shearsman 2006).

David Caddy is a poet and critic and editor of Tears in the Fence.

A masterclass is a masterclass

John Greening replies

The editor has asked me to respond to some of the points put by Mr Caddy in his generous and even-handed review. I am glad to do this, if only to emphasise that *Poetry Masterclass* was never intended to be a study of contemporary theories of poetics. I am a poet and school-teacher, offering 'personal, hands-on advice and demonstrations of technique, much as a performer might during a musical masterclass'.

That there are areas of the art of which I am still ignorant, that my approach (soft-peddalling context and tacitly scurrying over the avant-garde) might be perceived as narrow – all this I am obliged to acknowledge.

Narrow, but not narrow-minded, I trust – and certainly not disapproving of diction that is 'complex or tricky', as Mr Caddy implies. Yes, I prefer to connect something with something, or at least nothing with something that sings, and I am more likely to re-read W S Graham or Jen Hadfield than Jorie Graham or J H Prynne. But, as John Fuller recently reminded us, poetry delights in puzzles and problem-solving; it thrives on 'the fascination of what's difficult'.

I was hoping that, if nothing else, the examples of my own poetry in the book (where I am continually weighing 'usage, philology, etymology and meaning') would prove that I have some sensitivity to language, and it is odd that Mr Caddy moves directly from praising my inclusion of these to commenting on my 'relative lack of attention to words'.

What may be true is that I take too much for granted, don't make these things explicit enough (a hazard of being

a poet-teacher, working from the inside out); and this may also explain what he perceives as my indifference to practical criticism.

Are there English teachers out there who *don't* fling anonymous verses in front of their classes and enjoy the wrestling? My analysis in chapter 4 of the way a poem is composed should at least suggest how deeply I value this skill; but any of my other six Greenwich Exchange literary guides to particular poets would make the point.

What I must, finally, disagree with is the suggestion that 'taking the methods of other poems' as a starting point is somehow limiting. This has, of course, been going on since the time of Horace and was recommended to would-be writers by Auden, but readers of my book will find that what I generally do is offer a stimulus from everyday life and then give examples of how other poets have used it – write about a particular year (look at Hardy's *1967*), write a poem that's a joke (read some Armitage), describe a metamorphosis (Thom Gunn's *Rites of Passage*)...

I am honoured that Mr Caddy sees *Poetry Masterclass* as preparation for the reading of 'more developed' books by writers one can only hope to emulate. But a masterclass is a masterclass.

John Greening teaches English at Kimbolton School and his next collection, To the War Poets, will be published by Oxford Poets (Carcenet).



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In Search of Nathaniel Woodard, Victorian Founder of Schools

by David Gibbs; ISBN 978 1 86077 667 0; £16

'I do not believe that this age has given a more remarkable example of great energy, great constructive power, and a perfect mastery of what I may call the machinery of philanthropic agitation, of the most entire judgement and admirable tact in confronting difficulties, and of the great gift of winning confidence, than we have seen in the operations of Mr Woodard since he first laid his hand to the task.'

This tribute to Nathaniel Woodard was paid by W E Gladstone in 1861. David Gibbs' fascinating new study of Woodard and his legacy, *In Search of Nathaniel Woodard, Victorian Founder of Schools*, published to mark the bicentenary of Woodard's birth in 1811, shows that Gladstone's judgement wasn't wholly accurate.

Of Woodard's energy and constructive power there can be no doubt. Born into a lesser gentry family in Essex, and schooled only by his mother and a clergyman to whose sons he acted as tutor, he made his way to Oxford, achieving a pass degree after six years of study, and then took holy orders. He went on to found ten new schools and the Society of St Nicolas (now the Woodard Corporation) to oversee them.

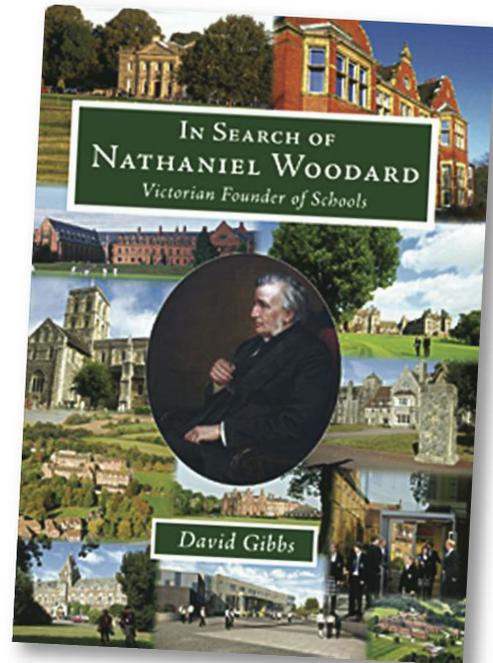
He was a resourceful and effective networker, drawing not only Gladstone but the future Lord Salisbury and John Walter, the editor of *The Times*, into his orbit. His fundraising methods would bring a blush to the cheek of all but the most shameless of present-day independent school development directors. On one occasion none of the guests was allowed to leave a function until the £15,000 outstanding on a particular project had been pledged.

His energy seems to have remained undimmed as the years advanced. His first wife died in 1873. Seventeen years later, at the age of 79, he married his 23 year-old housekeeper, Dorothy Porrit, to whom he left a very substantial inheritance when he died ten months later.

Yet his judgement was not entire, and he often confronted difficulties with stubbornness rather than with tact. As a curate, he soon fell out with Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, by preaching a sermon advocating individual confession and absolution and then by refusing to accept Blomfield's rebukes.

Woodard remained a staunch Tractarian, and the widespread, though incorrect, belief that individual confession and absolution were compulsory in the Woodard Schools meant that his work was opposed by many of his fellow churchmen. Gibbs shows that he was autocratic but by no means systematic. The Society of St Nicolas had no proper constitution during his lifetime, and kept few records. Its Chapter, whose members were hand-picked by Woodard, consisted of kindred spirits who were unlikely to question the founder's policies.

Grandiose building projects, notably the magnificent chapel of Lancing College, were undertaken when the schools that he had



founded lacked important domestic facilities. He did not live to see the dedication of the chapel in 1911, and by then the project had cost £300,000. The average annual earnings of a British teacher in that year were approximately £176.

The task to which Woodard laid his hand was defined in his manifesto *A Plea to the Middle Classes*, published in 1848:

It is my earnest wish ... that for all future time the sons of any of Her then Majesty's subjects should be taught, together with sound grammar learning, the fear and honour of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, according to the doctrines of the Catholic Faith as is now set forth in the Book of the Offices and Administration of the Sacraments of the Church of England.

A man of his time, Woodard had little interest in the education of girls. In 1880 he wrote: 'Public Schools for girls are of very doubtful merit. Religious houses or convents are more in harmony with my ideas.' Nevertheless, a number of girls' schools came to be incorporated in the Woodard Corporation, including Abbots Bromley School for Girls, Queen Margaret's, Scarborough and Queen Ethelburga's, Harrogate.

He envisaged a stratified system of schools serving different sections of the middle classes, with fees set at appropriate levels, and scholarships to ensure that the brightest students could transfer to a school that recruited from a higher social class.

Thus Lancing, which moved to its present site in 1857, was intended to educate the sons of gentlemen, officers, clergymen and superior tradespeople, whereas Hurstpierpoint, which opened in 1853, was recruiting the offspring of tradesmen,

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farmers and superior clerks, and Ardingly, which opened in 1870, originally admitted the children of small shopkeepers, mechanics, clerks and others of limited means.

Though he covers Woodard's life and achievements in only 47 pages, David Gibbs has done an admirable job of setting his subject's work in its religious, social and economic contexts. The second half of this short book deals with Woodard's legacy, and with the remarkable growth of the Woodard Schools in the 20th century. The final chapter (Woodard Post-Woodard) and the appendix illustrate how the Woodard Corporation has engaged with the maintained sector of education and, in recent years, embraced the City Academies movement. Here again, Gibbs shows a clear grasp of context. It is to be hoped that he will, in the future, offer a fuller treatment of this period, taking the baton from Brian Heeney, who in 1969 published a history of the Woodard Schools in the period 1848-1891.

Woodard was an unapologetic founder of faith schools. It now seems sad and ironic that one of his motives was a dislike of the influence of other factions in the Church of England and of the nonconformists. In the present day, the future of faith schools cannot be taken for granted. The Bishop of Oxford recently drew applause from militant secularists, such as Polly Toynbee, by suggesting that only 10% of places in Church of England schools should be reserved for practising Anglicans.

The Bishop of Exeter subsequently made a statement that drew attention to the challenge of maintaining a Christian ethos in church schools, and the importance of ensuring, 'that there are sufficient numbers among staff, parents, pupils and governors to provide that critical mass by which the school's ethos is maintained.'

Twenty-one years ago, Archbishop Robert Runcie addressed HMC's annual conference. He spoke of "a secular misunderstanding of what religion is" and went on to explain that "religion can only be experienced from the inside". Faith schools offer children and young people that opportunity.

Attending a secular school and merely studying religions as social and cultural phenomena ("the Smörgåsbord approach", as Runcie termed it) does not give pupils the opportunity to experience and to evaluate any of those religions. The secularist belief that children must be left free to make their own minds up about religion actually denies children the very experiences that would enable them to do so, and the wish that many parents have that their children should experience a Christian, a Jewish or a Muslim education is surely one that should be honoured.

Woodard believed that to participate in worship and to receive religious instruction is to be 'in contact with something assured, unchanging, and victoriously dynamic'. He knew that many pupils would reject what was offered, but believed that they might return to it in later life, experiencing that 'twitch on the thread' of which Evelyn Waugh (Lancing 1917-1921) wrote, borrowing the phrase from Chesterton. The work of the Woodard Corporation is, surely, as important now as it has ever been.

David Warnes is Team Priest at St Martin's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh, and taught history at Ipswich School.

In search of Nathaniel Woodard, Victorian founder of schools by David Gibbs – ISBN 978 1 86077 667 0 is available from the Woodard Corporation (Office Manager), Woodard Schools, High Street, Abbots Bromley, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 3BW, at £16 (cheques payable to the Woodard Corporation).

The Following Game

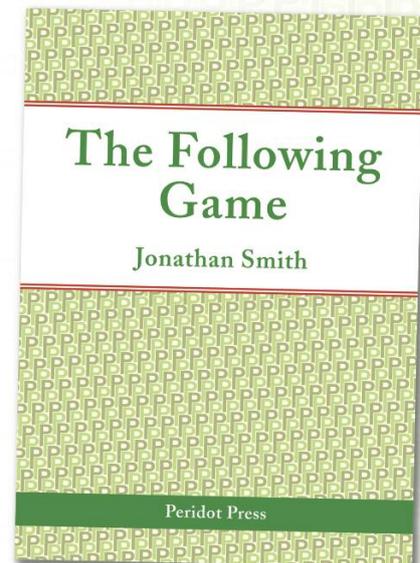
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Christopher Reid, winner of the Costa Book of the Year, 2009

Jonathan was, for many years, head of English at Tonbridge School. As well as *The Learning Game*, he has published six novels and written many plays for radio. He is the father of the writer Ed Smith, who also played cricket for Kent, Middlesex and England.



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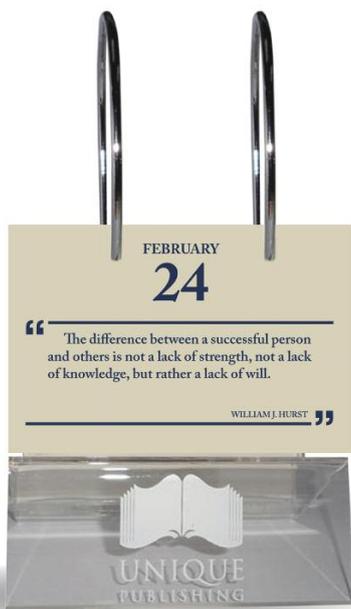
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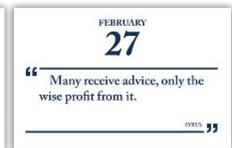
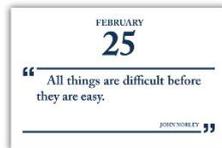
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Stephen Coyne

“Up to a point, Lord Copper”

Stephen Coyne recalls 15 years of herding sacred cows

The editor asked me to write some reflections on 15 years involvement with *Conference & Common Room* magazine. At first I was unsure whether I really had anything to say that would be of interest to readers, but so much has changed in that time that some personal reflections might illustrate the magazine’s history in a rapidly changing world.

I first got involved with *C&CR* because of my interest in photography. I have been a freelance photographer for 20 years and was press officer at Whitgift at the time. If I am honest, I was less than impressed with the quality of the pictures being used and one particularly out of focus front cover made me write to offer to help.

Jonty Driver was the editor and he also chaired the editorial team that was a diverse collection of Heads, deputies and common room members, including a GSA representative, a fairly radical idea at the time that worked really well for the magazine. Since I had a large collection of school photographs in a day when most schools did not, Jonty was keen to use them to illustrate articles.

In the mid '90s, technology was not as advanced as it is today: files of information were exchanged on floppy discs and no one emailed in articles. Nevertheless, as the current compiler of *Here & There*, I’ve found technological advances to be a mixed blessing, since I receive all sorts of articles from school press officers that are really designed for their local rags and are of no interest to the wider HMC body.

As in-house photographer for the magazine, I was also taking pictures to order for Jonty using film (remember that stuff?) that needed two or three days of processing time. This could be a bit of a roller coaster ride as I would get a week’s notice of the meeting and be asked to provide pictures illustrating things like free will, existentialism and sacred cows! The cows were easy since I had coloured slides of people washing cows in Indian rivers from my own travel collection, but free will and existentialism proved more elusive.

After a year or so I submitted an article about an innovative scheme, the brainchild of Tim Hands, involving Whitgift and the London Mozart Players. This proof that, despite my background as a chemistry teacher I could string a sentence together, led to an invitation to join the board, which met at the East India Club. That presented me with an unexpected challenge, since the building is not clearly labelled, so I walked around the whole square looking for the club before venturing into the most likely looking portico.

The editorial board was populated by some very clever people and I have fond memories of Ian Walker with his sharp one-liners and the dexterity he displayed once the business part of the meeting was done, as G&T co-ordinator, a post which carried very different responsibilities in those days! Dinner after the meeting in the company of very bright and witty people is one of my abiding memories of the time with *C&CR*.

On Jonty’s retirement, Nigel Richardson took over as editor and I am in awe of both individuals in that they managed to run



Sacred cow.



their schools at the same time as producing a quality magazine. Nigel moved the magazine on to be more topical and added some interesting features. I particularly remember his knack of finding relevant items from the *TES* of 100 years ago, which demonstrated that some things in education do not change!

Since I too became a Head in this period, the emergence of press officers in most schools and the arrival of digital photography proved very timely, as I no longer had to spend time setting up photographs to depict obscure situations and I happily became just another member of the committee.

A few years into my headship, HMC took over the magazine so that it became an in-house publication. Geoff Lucas is to be congratulated for that vision, but it did mean that the magazine had to prove its worth – no bad thing I feel! Tom Wheare took over as chairman of the steering group and Andrew Cunningham became editor. The move to have an editor who was not a serving Head was a much needed touch of realism as the demands on the position are too great for someone with a highly pressurised role already.

With John Catt publishing the magazine, the level of technology they could provide enabled the magazine to be much more relevant. Although *C&CR* has never set out to be an up to the minute publication, a shorter production time made it possible to write articles about current events and to contribute to current debates. Andrew used his contacts to secure very high profile figures as authors of articles, whilst Anthony Seldon put together a series of interviews with famous names to give the magazine a totally different feel.

When Tom retired, I was approached to take over as chairman of the steering group, much to my surprise. He had assured me that the role was very straightforward as long as you did not have to replace the editor. I took over on 1 September 2005 and, sure enough, on 2 September, the editor resigned! Mercifully, Tom agreed to step in at short notice to put the next issue together and he's still there.

As part of the editorial team, I have been collating the *Here & There* section. We have tried hard to make *C&CR* more user-

friendly in terms of type and by distributing news items around the pages, rather than having them in one section at the back. Derek Bingham and the production team at John Catt should take great credit for improving the look of the magazine.

One thing we have been keen to do is ensure that the Conference, the biggest event in our year, is suitably recorded. Keen colleagues (and some who are not so enthusiastic) have been prevailed upon to summarise activity at this annual event and I have tried to take photographs that give a flavour of the meeting and the city in which it is held. I know that I will be missed by my colleagues in HMC as they regularly expressed their disapproval, in a way that only head teachers can do, of me taking photographs of them at the various conference watering holes. One of my challenges was to try to capture on film those rare beasts, the serial non-attenders, if they perchance should emerge from such remote habitats as the mournful mudbanks of the Medway or the lush suburban encampments of Selsdon Man.

I have seen many changes to the magazine in 15 years, including the introduction of a website, ezine and a digital archive of the periodical. John Catt must take a lot of the credit for many of these initiatives and the magazine is very safe in their hands and with James Priory as the new chairman of the steering group. I firmly believe that an organisation as significant as HMC needs an in-house magazine. It is not the mouthpiece of the organisation, but it does allow a platform to express its views and, in today's world, I do not think we can afford to be without such an opportunity. I know that the next 15 years will see as many changes as the last 15, so good luck, *Conference & Common Room*, in recording the forward march of HMC.

Stephen Coyne retired as Head of Foundation at King's School, Macclesfield, in 2011.



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