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Conference common room

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Contents

Editorial	5
Letters to the Editor	6,7,9
Looking sideways	
Is Common Entrance fit for purpose? <i>Graeme May</i>	10
Independent schools and independent Scotland, <i>John Edward</i>	12
Aspiration+hard work = place at top university, <i>Simon Smith</i>	14
HMC and academies, <i>David Gibbs</i>	15
An open letter to the new director of OFFA, <i>Chris Ramsey</i>	17
Should A levels be an Olympic sport? <i>Tim Hands</i>	19
The IB: not just a qualification, <i>Julian Metcalf</i>	20
Interview	
C&CR interviews William Richardson, Secretary of HMC	22
Looking back	
A year of challenge and opportunity, <i>David Levin</i>	23
Looking out	
Sampling the American dream, <i>Maddi Power</i>	25
When inspectors call, <i>Mark Leppard</i>	27
The importance of partnership, <i>Alys Langdale</i>	29
Higher things	
Body and soul: <i>John Newton</i> interviews <i>Emma Taylor</i>	31
Cranmer's treasure trove, <i>Fredrik Arvidsson</i>	33
The seven virtues: Wisdom, <i>Alistair Macnaughton</i>	54
Sport	
How the boy jest became the Beau Sabreur, <i>Bernard Trafford</i>	35
Marching to Drake's Drum, <i>Simon Wormleighton</i>	37
Inside the bubble	
The unknown tomb of the literary warrior, <i>Roger V Mobs</i>	39
The resident Resident, <i>Benji Sperring</i>	40
Oundle and the RCM	42
Reviews	
Stage on Screen's Dr Faustus, <i>Stephen Burley</i>	43
South Downs, <i>Roger Dancey</i>	44
Our Century, <i>Malcolm Green</i>	47
A Duty to Serve, <i>Nicholas Hillman</i>	49
Good Wit and Capacity, <i>Chris Edwards</i>	53

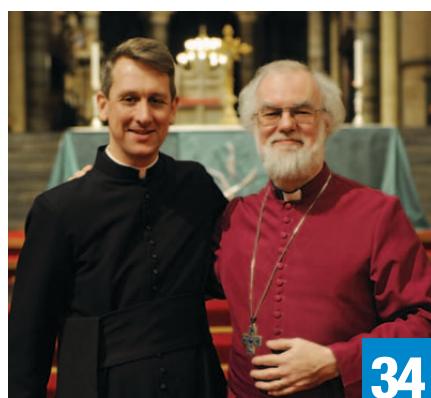
Are we having enough fun?
See also page 40.



11



25



34



38





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Editorial

Summer 2012

The Eton College Rowing Centre at Dorney Lake is a hugely impressive and visionary project conceived in the 1960s and brought to fruition in 2006 at a cost of £17 million. To have created a venue that needed little more than the addition of 20,000 temporary seats to allow it to host a major Olympic sport is a remarkable example of the creativity and capacity that can be found in the independent sector of education.

The Olympic Games are, of course, about the achievement and competition of individuals, but they are also meant to leave a legacy of long-lasting resources and a sustained surge of enthusiasm for participation in sport. The Olympian ideal has become tarnished by nationalism and politics and the Games have proved vulnerable to terrorism. Like any major media event, the insatiable demand for stories will lead to sensationalism, distortion and the promulgation of bad news.

But projects like Dorney Lake and the Olympic Park (connecting the Thames estuary with Hertfordshire along the course of the river Lea) will remain as sporting and environmental resources for many to enjoy. Meanwhile, former and present independent school pupils will be competitors in the London Olympics and these schools will continue to provide sporting opportunities and to share their resources as widely as they can.

But sport isn't everything, as Bernard Trafford reminds us. It is more and more the case that schools nurture music and drama as well as making excellent provision for sport. The opportunities created by a resident drama director or a partnership with an orchestra or conservatoire have both immediate and long-term effects.

But one thing enthusiasts must guard against is providing and then demanding too much of a good thing. Schools are rightly worried when their most talented pupils are asked to join a rugby or hockey club or to play county cricket. This is partly because they do not want their best players to be unavailable at crucial times, but it is also because they fear that the physical and mental demands made by increasingly 'professional' sport come at too early an age and impose too great a burden.

Teachers and parents must also guard against the temptation to take sport too seriously and participants must be reminded that losing is a perfectly possible outcome of a game and one that must be accepted with good grace – not a lesson the eponymous Doctor ever learned. Schools should provide children with the chance to try things and to do some things badly.

They must also provide penumbral spaces into which non-conformists can slip when the relentless pressure to toe the line becomes too burdensome. In many schools the art department provided such a hiding place, or the music school where solitary practice rooms served as boltholes. Those pupils who joined the stage crew or the car club, who formed rock bands or made videos achieved a degree of freedom and reached a level of creativity that may not have been mainstream but which was life enhancing and, sometimes, life saving. Lancing in Roger Dancey's time was clearly a school which allowed individual talent to flourish off piste.

The modern Olympics are a far cry from the days of Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, both alumni of HMC schools, and so is the contemporary educational scene. Independent schools somehow survived the challenges of the 20th century and enter the 21st as strong contributors to educational practice and the country's 'invisible export' income from abroad. It would seem that governments have abandoned, or at least postponed, plans for abolishing independent schools and now seek inter-sector partnership via the medium of academies.

Some are more enthusiastic about this than others and it is always worth remembering to bring a long spoon to the DfE banquet. In Scotland, independent schools face different challenges as demonstrated, for instance, by the contrasting approaches of OSCR and the Charity Commission, yet here too the sector thrives.

This appears to fly in the face of the prevailing economic winds and schools are faced with a difficult balancing act between funding and expanding bursaries and making provision for leaner years to come. Free-standing schools have been well aware of financial challenges throughout their histories. In the Second World War, for instance, schools as well established as Harrow and Tonbridge appeared to face a 'doubtful' future in the view of the Board of Education. Now it is the turn of Higher Education to face up

Editorial

to fee issues, to make economies and to discover new sources of income, whilst working out how to dance to the challenging rhythms of the Pied Piper of OFFA.

Meanwhile we must look beyond our schools and beyond these shores, as Alys Langdale reminds us, and we must not be afraid to look back, as Father Fredrik Arvidsson asserts with some vigour. Teaching is a fine profession and those who have joined it in the last decade have come to expect or, at least, accept high levels of scrutiny. Inspection and appraisal hold no terrors for our young colleagues and both HMC collectively and schools individually are increasingly willing to look beyond the traditional ways of doing things.

But all these things make great demands and it is vital that the work/life balance is healthy, that people know who they can share their troubles with and that when the Head asks the question posed by Jonathan Varcoe, are their staff and their pupils having any fun, they should be able to answer, resoundingly, yes.

Letters to the Editor

Sir

I was interested to read Dan Smith's interview with Barnaby Lenon. It provided a model for retiring Heads on how to build up a portfolio of interesting things to do after Headship. Far too many Heads have suffered from moving from the extreme business of Headship to a situation where they hardly have to use their brains or energy on fulfilling tasks.

It was also good to read that Barnaby is to play an active role in guiding ISC to serve the associations in a number of functions which can be better fulfilled by an umbrella organisation, not least on the political and legal sides. After the history of unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the relations between ISC and the associations this will be an important job for someone with such valuable Headship experience.

ISC has of course performed valuable services in the past but I should correct the impression, given in the interview, that it 'set up the independent school inspection system and the teacher induction programme'. Having been directly involved in the work that led to the HMC inspection system, I know that ISC did not come on the scene until sometime later.

As secretary of HMC my concern, shared by chairmen and other officers, was similar to that which had inspired Edward Thring and others in 1868 to set up HMC in the first place. If HMC did not have its own way of ensuring that appropriate standards were being achieved in its schools, the state would do it for them. In 1992, when Ofsted was being established, many people assumed it would inspect all independent schools. HMC Committee, which had previously opted not to join other associations in ISJC's Accreditation, Review and Consultancy Service (ARCS), decided to set up an in-house inspection system.

A team, which included James Sabben-Clare, Geoff Goodall, Derek Turner, Roy Haygarth and others, designed a suitable inspection regime and ran it for a time before asking the Secretary of State to give official legal recognition to HMC inspections. As a result Ofsted was invited to examine both HMC inspections and those undertaken by the other independent school associations and among the outcomes was the recommendation that they should merge into a single system before official recognition could be granted.

After considerable efforts by a working party of the associations and Dick Taylor, the director of ARCS, and under the chairmanship of Averil Burgess, a system was agreed which satisfied the associations; from this ISI was founded and became part of the ISC stable.

The formation of the Independent Schools Council Teacher Induction Programme in 1999 also came about as a result of cooperation between the associations with HMC playing a major part, though in this case the working party was chaired by Alastair Cooke, the general secretary of ISC. The DES (or whatever it was called in those days) wanted to introduce measures to improve the standard of teaching and particularly in the training of new teachers. Efforts were made to define what had to be achieved for student teachers to be granted 'Qualified Teacher Status'. Bob Mardling and I were involved in advising DES officials engaged on this work. The decision was made to set up panels across the country to monitor the achievement of QTS and the independent sector was allowed to have its own panel. The officials made many complimentary comments on how well ISCTip operated in those early years.

I hope this ancient history will still be of some interest.

Yours faithfully,
Vivian Anthony (Dr)

Sir

Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, once said *a propos* intellectual pursuit, teaching and learning: “We have sought the truth, and sometimes perhaps we have found it. But have we had any fun?”

This quotation should be framed and placed in Michael Gove’s office and mounted on the desks of all members of his department and all the members of the HMC and GSA hierarchy. It should be displayed on the walls of teacher training units and Ofsted and ISI headquarters, illuminated to stand out better when the gloom, psychological or physical, sets in.

Having retired from teaching over 15 years ago and from serving as an ISI inspector six years ago, I can see how the **business** of teaching is easing out the **fun** of it. As more and more regulations increase paperwork and the tickbox mentality; as health and safety rules are squeezing out spontaneity and proper educational risk-taking; as the young become more assertive, rude and obsessed with electronic gadgetry; as teachers become inundated by emails every hour of the day; as league tables assume ridiculous importance; and as inspections and internal assessments create a climate of apprehension, is it any wonder that teaching is becoming more of a burden than a joy?

Sensible rules and regulations are, of course, necessary, especially in an age of increasing litigation, and when parents demand what they want from the school in an ever more particular agenda, backed up by the notion that ‘the customer is always right’. Teenagers have always been a challenge to motivate, but today’s teenagers are less respectful of authority figures, seem to have a lot of money to spend and exist partly in a parallel cyberspace.

They require skilful handling and the job of those who run boarding houses is far more stressful today than it was only 20 years ago. Formerly *in loco parentis*, they are now burdened by parents breathing down their necks with emails and phone calls prompted by the first hint of complaint from their children. Heads should be aware of the greatly increased pressure house staff are under.

Inspection and appraisal have much to recommend them, but a sensitive system that looks as much for the good and excellent as for any shortcomings is essential. It is difficult to see any alternative to inspectors or senior staff sitting in on teachers’ lessons, but one can imagine that it has the same sort of effect as a blood pressure test has on a nervous patient and can therefore produce readings and results that are not entirely reliable.

Teaching has always been a demanding career, but it is now on the way to becoming a soul-sapping one where Jowett’s ‘fun’ has almost disappeared. Yet ‘fun’ is an antidote to stress, and without it stress can rise to dangerous levels. No ‘fun’ means no humour in class (“oh sorry, I’m behind with the syllabus so can’t afford any of that”), no humour with colleagues or time to take a breath and charge the batteries (“sorry, got to be on the pitch in five minutes, see you later” when later never arrives).

If life is without pauses, you cannot pursue any interests of your own and you become a slave to your school, with your family and the enthusiasm you originally had for teaching pushed to the margins. No one living like that can really teach well. Excellent teaching requires inspiration and mental energy. Stressed teachers are in danger of being exploited by their school to do too many things, whereas the finest teachers are often the maverick characters in the common room who find time for themselves, and it shows in their teaching.

Financial pressures may demand economies, when staffing is reviewed and common rooms are put under pressure to ‘deliver’ more. If the Head sees a possibility of cutting back on an academic department’s quota of teachers, there’s more work for the others to fit in and one fewer teacher to take the strain in the classroom and out of it.

At this time, more than ever, it becomes vital for the powers that be to encourage their staff and tell them that their hard work is very much appreciated. All too often nothing is said, leaving teachers unsure of their value. It is the responsibility of senior staff and especially the Head to commend the work of subject teachers, musicians, sportsmen, house staff – and administrative, catering and ground staff as well. Do senior management teams actually know if their staff are happy? If they don’t, there is something wrong with their system and re-training would not come amiss. It goes without saying that a happy staff means happy pupils.

Good school managers will be aware of staff ratios and the overall commitment expected of individual members of the teaching staff. Loading more and more onto good teachers, including housemasters and housemistresses with their enormous pastoral responsibility, inevitably means that the quality of their care and teaching suffers. Exam results or inspection reports of a school may be very complimentary, but have the staff and the pupils had any fun? It’s a question every Head should be asking.

Yours faithfully,
Jonathan Varcoe



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What do you want? Part 2: a possible solution

Sir

In your September 2009 issue you published an open letter from me addressed to the Heads of senior schools fed by IAPS preparatory schools which asked 'What do you want?' This question was designed to provoke a debate about entrance procedures into senior schools from prep schools. Unfortunately a proper debate, with a motion, speakers for and against and a vote, has yet to take place, but plenty of discussion has, not least at the IAPS conference and in meetings held at senior schools, most recently at Westminster and Cheltenham.

From the perspective of a prep school Head, it feels that some progress is being made, but for the entrance procedures to be made more user-friendly for all parties – children, staff at prep and senior school and parents – the first crucial step is to remove entrance requirements from the development of the 11-14 curriculum. Whilst the two remain entangled and Common Entrance, the Independent Curriculum, the Prep School Baccalaureate and individual school's own examinations vie for supremacy, movement towards improving the academic provision for 11-14 year olds in independent schools will remain stymied.

I was kindly allowed the floor at the most recent discussion at Cheltenham and conducted a very informal straw poll. To the question 'who believes that the Head's report is an integral part of the entrance procedure', I would suggest that 75% raised their hands. To the following question, 'who believes that an interview is an essential part of the entrance procedure', a similar number agreed. Whether standardised scores should be integral to the entrance procedure was more of a moot point and the response was less positive.

However, probably the most telling response, unless of course the audience had lost interest and were just willing me to finish, was to the question whether the importance of the Common Entrance examination should outweigh everything else. Nobody seemed to think that this was the way forward. This straw poll was, however, unfair on Common Entrance because the same set of questions was not posed to the audience as regards to the Prep School Baccalaureate or the Independent Curriculum or any other examination for that matter.

So, can I suggest that to kick-start the debate on the 11-14 curriculum, senior schools need to answer the question 'what do you really want?' with the following: CAT scores, or an equivalent, to give a basic indication of a child's innate ability; an interview during which the search for the real child can be launched; and an honest report on the child, which will not only underpin the entrance procedure, but also be the basis of a relationship of trust between the senior and prep school.

At present, even though it is never referred to, the market dominates the debate. What is appropriate in the cities and their suburbs is often irrelevant to rural schools. Supply and demand fluctuates with geography and with the economy, so to suggest that one entrance procedure fits all is flawed. To have any chance of success and of consistency within the sector, the starting point must be kept simple, hence my proposal of CATS, interview and report.

Agreement having been reached with this, the discussion of how and what children aged between 11-14 are taught can begin in earnest. The transfer process would be unencumbered by worried prep school Heads who daren't drift away from the *status quo* for fear of having a child failed and senior Heads who worry that by adopting a different entrance approach they might in some way present their school as less academic.

I would like to think that Beachborough, where I am Headmaster, and the schools that we feed are pretty representative of the majority of independent schools: thriving children and well run as a sound business, but never over-run with prospective parents to such an extent that one feels one can be bold enough to ditch the tried and tested. One can imagine the competitors. "Oh yes, Beachborough. A fine school but I hear that they don't prepare for senior schools in the normal way. Some exam which they set and mark themselves. More coffee?"

And talking of exams which they set and mark themselves, surely we have noticed that all senior schools, even those who swear by Common Entrance, just happen to have their own entrance examination at 13+ (usually maths, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning) so that they don't penalise those late entry candidates who haven't covered the Common Entrance syllabus. Logic says that if this simplified means of gaining entry is good enough for them, why is it not good enough for the rest?

I am sure that opinions have polarised and will continue to do so as meetings are set up in different parts of the country by schools with different interests and challenges to face. It is a fine old world when two of the most influential bodies involved in this debate, HMC and IAPS, manage to hold their conferences at the same time, in the same location, London, and stay in hotels next door to each other by chance! And then they compound the error by not seizing the opportunity to meet to debate the issue when 80% of the schools affected are represented.

So, a plea! Can either HMC or IAPS work towards a joint conference to debate this issue? And then, can the senior schools accept that the Head's report, an in-depth interview and CAT scores are a strong basis for deciding whether a child is suitable for their school, and can we all agree to develop a curriculum for children aged 11-14 which is academically rigorous and focuses on the skills that our children will need in the future?

Yours faithfully,
Jonathan Whybrow, Headmaster, Beachborough.

See also page 10.

Is Common Entrance fit for purpose?

Graeme May considers the future

Following the first Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) conference in November 2011, in which we discussed the Common Entrance (CE) question, I am encouraged to voice my concerns and to consider the alternatives.

If we can for a moment separate CE (the course) from CE (the exam), then problem number one is the fact that, in the era of pre-testing, CE results are largely an irrelevance. Rarely, very rarely, are we surprised by a sudden poor performance. We have pre-selected our preferred candidates and they have chosen months and months ago whether they are coming to us or going elsewhere. Barring utter disasters, about which we will usually have been warned, the candidates are coming to us anyway.

This leads to a pretty dispiriting week for senior school heads of department (HODs) who face the onerous task of turning the marking around very quickly without any sense that their work is at all relevant. We all know how demotivating it is to work under these conditions. I am not at all surprised when HODs fail to fill out ISEB questionnaires immediately following the exam – they're so exhausted and demotivated by the whole business. Why would they want to spend time doing more of it?

And as for coursework projects in geography and history? Well, I'm sorry to say that, though they are no doubt excellent in principle and, I am sure, often in practice, the reality is that senior schools can have no real guarantee as to their provenance or the circumstances under which they were completed, so they play almost no part in the assessment process. Better for prep schools to issue their own project grade and append it to the CE results sheet, given that they are much better placed to know just how much of the project is the pupil's own, properly independent, work.

We feebly defend the marking of CE on the grounds that 'it's useful for setting' but the evidence I have from my HODs is that CE exams are so unreliable in that regard that major resetting is required in maths and MFL within the first term and complete resetting happens at the end of the year as the pupils move on to GCSEs.

Add to that the suspicion that some prep schools are themselves not that enthusiastic about CE but have got themselves into a bind with parents who threaten to leave at 11+. They find themselves having to hold CE up as some kind of totemic talisman or 'gold standard' and the safest means of entry to the senior school of choice whether or not they actually believe this. This view was also expressed at the ISEB conference.

The role of the pre-test is very pertinent to the CE question. I represent a school that has pre-tested for over 20 years and I will happily say that it suits us and, we think, our prospective boys and parents very well. With pre-testing, at Abingdon,

all parties get to have a pretty certain sense of where they're heading by the end of the autumn term of Year 7.

Under a scheme with CE as the only competitive qualifying exam, children do not find out if they are into their first choice school until shortly before they leave their prep school in Year 8. Ginger beer all round for the successes, but doom and frantic disaster for those scrabbling to find a place elsewhere with schools rushing headlong towards the end of the year. This year, owing to matters Royal, CE results won't be published until 21st June, ten days before some schools pack up for the beach.

In the days of the 'cosy chat' between prep and senior school Heads, I'm sure such a late decision did not present insuperable problems, but we live in a different era now and senior schools can no longer rely on the prep school Head's guarantee that 'he or she is a good kind of chap/gal'.

I do not mean that the report from the prep Head is irrelevant to us – far from it, in fact – but a much greater transparency and fairness is required these days. Senior schools don't expect to get favoured pupils into Oxbridge colleges via the 'cosy chat' method. Universities expect to be able to make up their own minds, no doubt with the aid of a school reference, but also with fair and accurate standardised data.

In recent years, of course, Oxford and Cambridge have come full circle on entrance exams and now rely heavily on their own form of pre-test, via HATs, ELATs, BMATs, TSA and the like. They've not quite returned to the two E offer, but once you've got an offer from them, the achievement of the 3A offer is largely just a formality.

Pre-test is, I suspect, here to stay. We may fiddle around with it, and there may be a common pre-test available soon via ISEB, the consequences of which will need some thinking through themselves. Senior schools may lose what to them can be a major marketing opportunity. Prospective pupils spend a day

An end to the emperor's new clothes.





A pretty certain sense of where they're heading.

in school not just doing exams but also sampling the life and facilities that would be available to them were they to choose to come in the end, assuming they have the choice. Whatever happens, the days of CE as a properly competitive exam are over and its doubtful whether it's even a qualifying one.

And so to problem two. Does CE encourage (and then assess performance in) a course that a) is worthwhile in itself from an educational point of view; and b) passes onto senior schools pupils with the kind of experience, knowledge and skills that they are looking for?

At my school, the jury is out on this. Some HoDs say they need to spend much of Year 9 repairing the damage done by CE courses that have prioritised technique over understanding and promoted rote-learning of facts over rounded experience and thinking skills.

On the other hand, some HoDs tell me they are perfectly happy with the CE courses as decent preparation for life in our school. One would never expect a consensus view, of course, though at Abingdon the negative views do, just, outweigh the positives.

The solution to problem two does, though, lie in our hands and I did agree with the sentiment of the ISEB conference that senior and prep schools do not communicate enough. With pre-test taking the sting and pressure out of most of the final two prep school years (7 and 8), there is a grand opportunity here to develop a really exciting and useful curriculum that integrates seamlessly with the Year 9 and above senior curriculum.

Perhaps this is exactly what Galore Park and their 'independent curriculum' is doing, but I don't have a sense that take-up of that has got very far yet. My own suspicion is that the slimming down of the CE exams is what needs to happen first. A rich curriculum, yes, but pretty slim exams that test a good balance of knowledge and thinking skills as appropriate to subject.

Some of that slimming down appears to be happening already with the encouraging changes to the English papers we heard about from John Venning, the paper setter. Prep school pupils do need an exam to mark the end of their prep school time but let us put an end to the force feeding of battery hens for a year or more that some of the current exams encourage.

If senior schools felt that the courses being followed in Years 7 and 8 were genuinely useful and could see an end to the emperor's new clothes situation of suggesting CE is an important exam in 'entrance' terms, then I think that acting as an exam board to mark and endorse the achievement of those about to arrive in their schools would not be such a chore and would in fact be a courtesy to those who are about to pay their mortgages and keep them entertained in the classroom for the next five years. The suggestion that CE should become Common Assessment (CA) was made in the conference and it has some resonance with me.

Graeme May is deputy head academic at Abingdon School.



John Edward.

"I was born in London, and went to school in Scotland – I used to be dead tired when I got home at night."

Norman Wisdom

HMC heads will know from last Autumn's Conference that a short trip north over the Border is a long journey in terms of education. That much is nothing new. While challenges, choices and charges of schools are the same, there have been many years of divergence in structure and approach.

The recent upsurge in debate about Scottish independence, in part prompted by some gentle prodding from Westminster, is simply the delayed UK-wide reaction to a political reality in Scotland that changed utterly in May 2011. Education has always been a Scotland-specific matter, from long before parliamentary devolution caught up with the administrative variety. The Education (Scotland) Act 1872 took over the running of schools from the Church of Scotland's Board of Education and in 1885 the 'Scotch Education Department' was established within the new Scottish Office.

In the independent sector, some schools in SCIS became independent following the changes of the mid-1970s and some are younger still than that, while others pre-date the Treaty of Union itself. From religious establishments in the 12th and 13th centuries, through the merchant philanthropy of the 17th and 18th centuries to the liberal classicist adherents of the 19th century, Scotland contains a wide range of histories and approaches in a sector that numbers around 60 mainstream schools overall, and 21 in HMC. SCIS members also number a range of national and regional specialist and special needs centres, as well as one MOD school.

Independent schools and independent Scotland

John Edward describes some differences north of the Border

Devolution to Holyrood in 1999 kicked off a game of educational reorganisation which, if not now close to the final whistle, may at least be into its second half. The Labour-Liberal coalition in the early years designed an inter-subject 'Curriculum for Excellence' which, in truth, is more a methodology than a curriculum. Implementation of this has, unsurprisingly, not been straightforward, although its adoption and use by independent schools is entirely voluntary.

The curricular moves have in turn prompted substantial changes to the Scottish portfolio of examinations. In 2013-14, Standard and Intermediate exams will be replaced by a new 'National' 4 and 5, only the latter of which will be externally assessed. More modest reform of Higher and Advanced Higher will follow thereafter.

Independent school teachers have been disproportionately involved in the design of the individual subject courses, although some schools have yet to decide when, and if, to adopt the new qualifications elsewhere. As England and Wales will soon be able to testify, any major reorganisation of examinations is a time of concern for Heads, parents and teaching staff. This will be true for those Scottish independent schools that offer GCSE and iGCSE and A/AS level, while another half-dozen are now firmly rooted in the IB.

Add to this ever-thickening stew recent change in the inspection framework. Scottish independent schools are still inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, which falls within another new body, Education Scotland. Although not bound by state curricular changes or examination diets, the sharing of an inspectorate appears to work well not least because the inspectorate was at pains to develop a new framework of inspections in co-operation with the independent sector.

Full school inspections and professional engagement visits are tailored towards the independent sector, supported by 'link' teams of specific inspectors. To date, this approach has not been mirrored on the social services side for boarding schools and day care facilities by what is now known as the Care Inspectorate.

Nation/region	Government Department	Minister	Registration	Inspectorate	Care body - boarding	Teacher Registration	Pensions	Charities
ENGLAND	Department for Education (DfE), HM Government	Secretary of State for Education (<i>Conservative</i>)	Department for Education (following Ofsted examination)	Independent Schools Inspectorate (for ISC schools)*	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)	General Teaching Council for England (until 31.03.2012)	Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)	Charity Commission for England and Wales
SCOTLAND	Learning Directorate, Learning & Justice, Scottish Government	Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (<i>Scottish National Party</i>)	Registrar of Independent Schools (following HMIE inspection)	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education ("Education Scotland" from 01.07.2011)	The Care Inspectorate	General Teaching Council for Scotland	Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme (STSS)	Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
WALES	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)	Minister for Education and Skills (<i>Labour</i>)	Schools Management Division (following Estyn inspection)	Estyn (Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales)	Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)	General Teaching Council for Wales	Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)	Charity Commission for England and Wales
NORTHERN IRELAND	Department of Education (DENI), Northern Ireland Executive	Minister of Education (<i>Sinn Féin</i>)	DENI (following inspection by Education and Training Inspectorate)	Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)	ETI with Health and Social Services (H&SS)	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS)	Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

*



Some independent schools also inspected by Ofsted, the Schools Inspection Service (Focus Learning Trust and the Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship) the Bridge Schools' Inspectorate (Christian Schools Trust and the Association of Muslim Schools).

One noted area of difference, indeed independence, within UK education is that of teaching itself. While the GTC in England and Wales receives its *coup de grâce* via Royal Assent, the GTC Scotland will move in the opposite direction to full operational independence in April 2012. While registration of independent school teachers in Scotland is preferred rather than required, there are hurdles to jump for those from elsewhere in the UK who wish to have their teaching qualifications and experience recognised by the GTCS.

Teach First ambassadors do not, yet, receive full registration in Scotland, nor is the programme offered by any Scottish university. However, SCIS has been working with partners to try and establish some form of post-graduate, work-based certificate which would not only bring existing ambassadors into full registration, but provide an attractive route for new Teach First alumni interested in the Scottish sector.

Teachers in Scotland are members of a separate Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme which offers similar but distinct pension benefits to the TPS. Recent industrial action barely registered in Scottish independent schools, but only once agreement is reached on future reform and membership of the TPS can a similar process begin in Scotland. Positive results for the independent sector would be as welcome in Kinross as they would in Kent. It would, however, take a brave and actuarial-minded soul to predict the structure of public sector pensions should Scottish independence come to pass.

Pensions and charitable status have been the two great existential issues of recent years. Despite the pivotal news in England and Wales recently, the Scottish charity regulator (OSCR) operates under an Act which, unlike the 2006 Act elsewhere, makes explicit provision concerning public benefit and especially mentions fees and charges. Nevertheless, seven HMC schools have now passed the charity test in Scotland, as have six other independent schools, and the sector awaits the lessons that OSCR has learnt from what was a time-consuming and intensive process.

What the kaleidoscope of Scottish education would look like if it were given the greatest shake of all by a result in a referendum for Scottish independence, is anyone's guess. The current Scottish government has had little reason to comment specifically on the independent sector, except to observe that it formed part of the 'rich tapestry' of Scottish education and contributed a turnover in the order of £200 million a year. Until the focus of the referendum debate sharpens, it is likely to stay that way. In the meantime, we will continue to define independence in Scotland in our own terms.

John Edward has been the Director of SCIS since May 2010.

www.scis.org.uk - @SCISschools

SOCIAL MEDIA

We are pleased to announce that HMC is now active on the following social media channels. Please add us and pass on to your colleagues to help build our network of followers.

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Facebook Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) www.facebook.com/pages/Headmasters-Headmistresses-Conference-HMC/118022814972600
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Aspiration + hard work = place at a top university

Simon Smith describes an exciting project in the land of the Olympic legacy

One of the most successful and enduring partnerships between the state and independent sectors over the past five years has been that between Kingsford Community School in Beckton and Brighton College.

In 2006 Joan Deslandes and Richard Cairns, with support from HSBC, initiated a scholarship scheme to allow two or three able 16-year olds each year to benefit from a sixth-form boarding education at Brighton. From the outset this proved a conspicuous success in terms of both personal development and academic achievement.

What has hitherto been, in Joan's words, a lifebelt for the few is in the process of becoming a liner for the many. September 2012 will see the opening of London Academy of Excellence, the country's first sixth form college free school, in Stratford in the East End. Its aim is to enable bright young people from one of the most deprived areas in Britain to secure places at Russell Group universities by offering just 12 'enabling' A level subjects.

Brighton College and seven other independent schools are sponsoring the enterprise, through seconding staff or providing resources, guidance and expertise; HSBC are providing some start-up funding and premises for open events and assessments; and I am co-ordinating the project.

This has necessarily involved a significant change of work habits and patterns, not to mention vocabulary. Together with my excellent assistant Rose (on a year out between academe and a career in the law), I divide my time between office life here in Brighton and two or three days a week in London for meetings at the DfE or its agencies for discussions about service deliverables, community consultation, risk logs and of course the looming presence of the funding agreement, that critical acknowledgement from the government that you are setting up a school that is both wanted and viable.

It was, however, in the visits to likely feeder schools last term when we felt most on home ground. The cohorts of Year 11s that we met – sometimes in a neatly arranged G&T group of about 30, occasionally in the whole panoply of 300 – provided a cheery reminder of what I had left behind at the end of the summer term and, importantly, the real reason I was engaged in this project.

Some of the Heads have been ardent supporters and tell us that this is just what is needed for their ambitious students. Others are more wary of this public school bloke with a bag full of prospectuses and flyers advertising open evenings. They see free schools with their direct government funding as undermining their own work and not addressing the real problems in education.

Some are conspicuously absent when we turn up at their schools. One of the best moments in the project so far was when a Head, after being robustly critical to me of all that Free Schools stood for, nevertheless brought a minibus load of his students along to an open event to hear about it for themselves and to make their own decisions.



Robert Wilne.



Simon Smith.

'Never set your heart on a particular site' is the received wisdom of those who have had anything to do with setting up a Free School, 'it won't be your site for long'. This has indeed proved to be the case. We have sized up a number of possible premises, only to see them slip away again, but at last we are within an ace of signing the lease on a former office building in Stratford High Street, just a few minutes' walk away from the Olympic site. It is urban in its feel, at the centre of an excellent communication network and has commanding views of the Aquatic Centre from the upper floors. It will, I feel sure, have a strong appeal.

Applications for places are coming in thick and fast. Rose is good at dealing with the ones who want advice about their A level options or reassurance about applying to a completely new school that has no staff yet.

One applicant boldly asks why anyone should apply at all when there are other good options nearby. ‘‘Because the schools in charge of the teaching all get 90+% of their students A or B grades’’, I reply. Remember *Hard work + Aspiration = Place at a top University*, I add, quoting from our prospectus and website. ‘‘Will there be a uniform?’’ someone else asks. Yes. I find myself repeating the mantra *Look smart: Be smart* and actually they take well to this.

Most touching of all, ‘‘Will there be financial support for those of us with families on low incomes?’’ asks a mild-mannered and, I think, very clever girl hidden behind a hijab, who wants to be a dentist. Another of my roles this year is to attract sponsorship from companies and corporations to help such young people remain in academic education rather than go straight into employment, perhaps in the family business.

And what of the sponsoring schools, those who chose to develop this project with us? The take-up of subject areas was swift: Eton asked to take on English; Forest had a practised university advisor who wanted a change of direction at the end of his career; City of London Boys had a member of PE staff who was strong on urban sports. Likewise Caterham, Hampton, Highgate and

KCS Wimbledon all had enthusiastic HoDs keen to share their resources. Within the last month Robert Wilne, currently a deputy at Highgate, has been appointed as the first Head (or Principal Designate in DfE parlance).

The new year has heralded a host of events crowding in upon each other: the appointment of the deputies and then the rest of the staff; the final open events and the assessment days for the applicants; meetings with the DfE, meetings with legal advisors, meetings with project steering groups, meetings with sponsor schools; and dealing with emails from people who want to sell you things.

It feels a bit like being the driver of the train in that 1950s BBC film of the journey from London to Brighton speeded up to take just four minutes. Events, like stations on the line, flash by with dizzying speed. Starting a Free School is no soft option for retirement. It is continuous, hard and often frustrating work. But none of this detracts from the all-enveloping nature of the job, the gathering sense of ownership. All of us involved each day feel a palpable sense of purpose in our plan to change young lives.

Simon Smith spent most of his career at Brighton College, as a teacher of English, and for the last 12 years as second master.

HMC and academies

David Gibbs gives a bird’s eye view

Since retiring as Headmaster of Chigwell in 2007, I have been working full-time for the Skinners’ Company as its education officer. This has included helping to establish two academies, the Skinners’ Academy, Hackney (where the Company is the sole sponsor) and the Skinners’ Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells (where Skinners’ School, a state grammar school, is the lead sponsor).

In addition I have been associated with Tonbridge School’s co-sponsorship of the Marsh Academy, New Romney, Kent; and, as a governor at Ardingly and fellow of the Woodard Corporation, I have seen something of its sponsorship of four academies in different parts of the country.

There is an important distinction to be made between the *transformational* academies and the academies. The first were created by New Labour to replace failing schools or to create good schools where none previously existed, which have usually included a new build. In the second group, the Coalition government is currently providing opportunities for many maintained schools to leave the local authority and instead take up a measure of independence under the umbrella of central government.

Often schools which have been underperforming have been given no choice by the DfE but to become academies, usually with a strong supportive partner. It is in this latter context that the government seeks to persuade independent schools to become involved in a variety of different ways with underperforming maintained schools, often through the vehicle of the formation of an academy trust. It is important to emphasise at this stage that there are now *no funds available for complete new builds*; and the government is determined to raise standards for all

pupils and in particular those in less advantaged communities.

Some points to note:

1. **Academies can make a big difference.** All three in the Skinners’ family have witnessed a substantial transformation in attitudes, confidence, and academic performance, as measured by the five A*-C, including English and maths, ratio at GCSE. It should also be noted that all three have had substantial and stunning new builds as a result of becoming academies.
2. **Governance is a crucial factor.** Of course Heads and teachers are vital but ultimately it is governors who have the capacity to transform underperforming into good schools. Attentive and committed governors will take great pains to appoint good Heads and then to support them up to the hilt. If problems do need addressing they will take appropriate measures.
3. **Branding and DNA.** Lord (Andrew) Adonis, the architect of the previous Labour government’s transformational academies, emphasised that it was not the financial resources that he wanted independent schools to provide but rather their DNA. What distinctive features have made independent schools successful? How can these be translated to another school community? The brand name of a successful sponsor does make a difference.
4. **Avoid distraction.** It is important that the sponsoring school is not distracted by a new venture. The job of its



David Gibbs.

Looking sideways

Head, senior staff and governors is to run their school. It is possible however that an independent school community will have some people who can transmit their DNA. Categories which come to mind are recently retired members of staff, youthful and ambitious heads of department, and members of the board who can make the commitment and feel they can make a real difference.

At the Marsh, the Tonbridge Head and bursar, a governor (who lives locally) and a parent (a solicitor) have been notably valuable; at Skinners' Kent Academy, two of the Skinners' School board plus the Headmaster and the head of chemistry have been hugely supportive. Most independent school Heads will help to govern prep schools. This is not greatly different.

5. **What about underperforming schools?** Some independent schools will say they are unfamiliar with this world, including that of mixed ability teaching. What they do know about however is *schools*. Pupils, teachers, parents, support staff and governors are much the same the world over, they simply operate on different playing fields. Do not forget that some of the very best special needs departments are in independent schools.
6. **Links.** They should not be forced. Links between departments, for example, may evolve naturally over time. They can come in many different forms and much will depend on personalities. At their best they can be extremely productive. Some that have proved successful are:

Combined CPD.

A level and GCSE revision sessions.

Oxbridge seminars.

Occasional visits to the sponsoring school to take advantage of specialist facilities, especially music, drama, sport, and sometimes very specific academic coaching.

One scheme that has worked notably well in the Skinners' family is the Gap programme for learning mentors. The two Skinners' grammar schools plus Tonbridge have each year provided several leavers who are taking a Gap year to work as learning mentors at the two academies in Kent.

They act as classroom assistants, helping especially with individual reading, coach maths, help with games and extra-curricular activities. It is an unusual but extremely fulfilling and worthwhile Gap year and, of course, stands out on a CV later in life. They are paid and regarded as associate members of staff. Several have appeared to find a vocation as teachers.

It does help to have a liaison member of staff. Many colleagues will not have the time or the inclination to become involved but there will be some who become inspired and sense they can make a difference.

It is important also not to be seen as patronising in any way and to remember that benefits flow both ways. Maintained schools often have great expertise in working with children from fractured/violent homes, special needs, and in the use of data in monitoring progress.

7. **Models vary.** Sponsorship comes in different forms. You can be a sole, lead or co-sponsor. It is well worth talking with those who have done it before. As in other walks of life, take care with whom you go into partnership. Your own brand name is at stake here and ideally your destiny will be in your own hands.

You do not want to give your *imprimatur* to an enterprise and then find that you do not like the cut of the jib of your Principal or fellow governors who have a majority on the board. Unless you are very sure of your partners you may be advised to be a sole or lead sponsor. Remember that geographical accessibility to the school you are supporting does matter. Ideally the schools will be 20-40 minutes apart.

Forming a partnership in the maintained sector will not suit every HMC school. Many of them, in any event, already provide substantial support to their local school community in a variety of different ways.

The Skinners' experience, however, is that these opportunities can be extremely fulfilling for all parties, and make a real difference to the life chances of young people who all too often have found themselves at the bottom of the pile.

David Gibbs is the education officer of the Worshipful Company of Skinners.

HERE & THERE

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Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

Dauntsey's pupil receives prestigious cricket award

Dauntsey's School are delighted to announce that Jack Mynott has been named the Cricket Society's Leading Schools All-Rounder 2011. Jack has played for Dauntsey's 1st XI since the age of 14 and we believe that he was the youngest player to score a 1st XI century at the school, back in June 2009.

Jack was due to receive the award at the Society's Spring Dinner at The Royal Over-Seas League in St James's, in April. Jack's name will also be inscribed on the Wetherell Trophy, which resides in the Lord's Museum.

He is in very good company: England players such as Chris Cowdrey and Derek Pringle are previous recipients of this prestigious award, and Dauntsey's newly appointed cricket coach, Jon Ayling, won it in 1985.



Jack Mynott.



Chris Ramsey.

An open letter to the new director of OFFA

Dear Professor Ebdon

Congratulations on your appointment as director of the Office for Fair Access – OFFA to most people. Rather than being welcomed by the HE community and the famously generous British press, it is a shame that the appointment has been surrounded by controversy. After all, you are obviously a very successful and innovative Vice Chancellor, and success and innovation are important aspects of Higher Education. I hope that is not patronising, coming from the Head of an independent school: it is not meant to be.

I hope too, that in the spirit of openness and co-operation that the coalition government is supposed to represent, you will not mind these words of advice. They come from a sector you have been painted as opposing. I trust that caricature is untrue, as most of the caricatures of the independent sector are too. We do not claim to speak for all sixth form students, or even all the best ones.

But the independent sector does claim – justifiably – to represent some of the most important seed-corn for the country's intellectual future. For example, nearly a third of those studying medicine or dentistry at university in 2009 came from ISC schools; over a quarter of those studying languages did. Over 30% of the intake of your former university – Imperial – was from ISC schools.

You might lament this, but the universities themselves might respond that they need students who have been independently educated. You might argue that these strong students would have gained places wherever they were educated ... but would they? 23% of the physics A level candidates nationally in 2009 were from ISC schools; many state schools do not even teach physics.

So, for what it is worth, here are five pieces of advice for you to take or leave – or rather, five pleas for you to listen to or not. First, I hope you will indeed listen – listen widely and respectfully – to all the various opinions surrounding Higher Education at the moment.

Some of what is said is emotional. Here for example is a *Daily Telegraph* journalist commenting on your own appointment:

a strident critic of the government's university policy, Prof Ebdon is obsessed with widening the social mix of students at our best institutions. He is a staunch defender of so-called Mickey Mouse subjects and in evidence to a parliamentary committee – which subsequently refused to endorse his appointment – he said that he was prepared to fine universities or bar them from charging the maximum

tuition fees to whip them into line. Unsurprisingly, our best universities view the prospect of such a man overseeing admissions policy with dread.

Thus the *Daily Telegraph* on, if you please, St Valentine's Day 2012. Other commentary is more reasoned and fair. Here is Dr Malcolm McVicar, Vice Chancellor of the University of Central Lancashire:

I have known Les Ebdon for many years. He is professional. He is a man of sound judgement and he understands the issues [of widening participation] well.

But as you doubtless know if you read stuff like this, rhetoric is seldom balanced, and the skills of critical thinking and analysis that you will have used as a scientist should therefore come in handy. Your colleague Professor Thomas of Bristol wrote recently to *The Times*, for example, saying that

UK universities have long been committed to both widening participation and fair access. The latter is not about dumbing down; it is about identifying those students who have the ability and potential to succeed at university, regardless of their background. This has everything to do with excellence. A level results are one of the best indicators of ability and potential, but they are also heavily influenced by a student's background and the school attended.

Professor Thomas described the Bristol admissions process, whereby A level results are mechanically adjusted according to the type of school attended, as 'nuanced'. You should fear that admissions offices will try to second guess what supposed advantages or disadvantages a potential student might have had – in other words, to tamper with the empirical evidence offered by the one thing all students do have: exam grades.

After all, grades at public exams (taken by virtually all potential students) are the only actual level playing field. Doubtless they are 'influenced by background', but ability and motivation are the much more overwhelming factors. I hope you will be guided by this important principle.

Secondly, the office you run is rightly named the Office for Fair Access. Now, people get very worked up about fairness. The Schwartz report of a few years ago did a good job, though, of defining what fair access to university should look like. Professor Schwartz wrote:

Fairness does not mean that the government should choose students. The Steering Group wishes to affirm its belief in

Looking sideways

the autonomy of institutions over admissions policies and decisions. Moreover, it should be clearly recognised that it is perfectly legitimate for admissions staff to seek out the most academically excellent students.

These so-called Schwartz principles are like the Gettysburg address: Vice Chancellors value them and they represent one of the few bits of government policy they genuinely and unanimously support. Do not tamper with them.

Thirdly, there's an important mantra in the Independent Schools Inspectorate – and I imagine Ofsted have something similar, or ought to – which runs 'never leave a school worse than it was when you arrived'. It's an important principle, because the job of an inspecting team is to facilitate improvement, not destroy the institution.

In the same way, the job of a quango or government agency is not to take over the management of an institution, whether that is the NHS, the Army or Higher Education. It is certainly not to harm it. It is to support, be professionally and respectfully critical if necessary, but not to make anything worse than it was.

Some of the rhetoric around your appointment suggested your agenda was to 'dumb down', to ensure that a wider social range of social classes attend top universities whether they are genuinely capable of doing so or not. Are you really 'in favour of Mickey Mouse degrees' as the *Daily Telegraph*'s journalist has it? Would such an approach be right, from the Director of OFFA? No, that would make things worse in Higher Education, not better. When you move on, let HE be better than it was.

Fourthly, please beware of sabre-rattling. If it is true that you said you '...will not shirk from pressing the "nuclear button" against universities which do not take action to admit more disadvantaged students', then there is already a risk of a split

in Higher Education which would be very sad. Threatening institutions such as the more famous in the Russell Group will not intimidate them. They will drag their feet, they will take more overseas students whose fees are less restricted by politics and they will make (if they have not already made) plans to leave the state sector.

I don't think we want a big independent sector in Higher Education – an independent Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, UCL, say – and I don't think we want an Ivy League which operates by different rules. The institutions which would suffer under those circumstances would be the Keeles, the UWES and, dare one say it, the Bedfordshires. The students who would suffer would be those unable to afford even higher fees. It is all very well to wish for OFFA to have teeth, but teeth are for nourishment and not always for biting.

Finally, I think it is brilliant that your own background shows the value of education. You have been educated at a selective state school yourself, as well as at one of our top Russell Group universities: you owe your success to ability which was fostered by teachers and lecturers. You would, I suspect, not have wanted to be denied the chance to read chemistry because your university had to cut its science budget, and I imagine you would have scorned the suggestion that you needed your results to be massaged in order to gain your place.

You are proof that to be a good manager you don't have to study management. You are proof that students should study subjects that are hard and that inspire them with passion. Above all, you are proof that a chemistry degree can lead to an exciting, influential and public career. You are, in that sense, not unlike Margaret Thatcher.

I for one trust you to do a great job at OFFA. Good luck.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Ramsey Co-Chair, HMC/GSA Universities Committee.

HERE & THERE

Oundle's Chinese New Year

Every year, staff and pupils at Oundle School organise Chinese New Year celebrations. On 23rd January, pupils gathered in the School Cloisters for traditional Chinese dragon dancing to celebrate the start of the Year of the Dragon, the school's dragon dance team parading through the town's Market Place.

Oundle School's golden dragon is approximately 18 metres long, and ten performers are required for the dance. It is rare to find a dragon lantern of this size in schools across England.

"If the dragon dancing in the morning break was within the pupils expectations, Chinese food for the supper did come as a surprise," commented Hua Yan, head of Chinese. "I didn't think the school catering staff could cook such good Chinese food, but the Chinese food tonight was so tasty," said a third form pupil. Some pupils even went for fifth helpings, and a member of the catering staff said they were pleased to see that their hard work was really appreciated.

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Should A levels be an Olympic sport?

Tim Hands thinks we might win gold if we play to our strengths

In 1892 Henry Newbolt published his poem *Vitae Lampada*, better known as ‘Play up, play up, and play the game’. The argument is simple. Attend school. Play its sport. Absorb its ethos. Graduate to the forces. Enjoy a posting to Empire. Enforce the values of school and Empire regardless of personal consequence.

The poem has usually been viewed as a rationale of Victorian public school education. Not until this article has the poem’s possible true significance been identified as a post hoc rationalisation of the 21st century A level system.

We live in postcolonial times. With that transition comes an innate national tendency to cross question and beat up our national institutions and achievements. The Empire taught one to shoot straight – supposing the Gatling gun worked, as it didn’t in Newbolt’s poem. But a curved trajectory is now the fashion: we like to shoot our institutions in the foot.

Are A levels national institutions worthy of the name? Certainly, they have some kind of cultural explanation. From early modern times, and especially since the 19th century, the university system on the Continent has, broadly speaking, tended to see tertiary education as the acquisition, via mass methods of instruction such as the lecture, of skills directly relevant to a professional career.

By contrast, British universities, especially Oxford and Cambridge, have viewed university as the facilitator, via smaller and more social mediums such as the tutorial, of an attitude of mind and a philosophy of life – as well as a set of transferable skills relevant to subsequent employment. Read the columns of the *Times Higher*, with its weekly denunciations of Cable and Willetts, and you will see that belief in the supremacy of this system runs very deep. Nor can we deny that most of our own schools are pledged to a similar philosophy.

There is of course a flip side. To prepare students for this tertiary luxury, our secondary system of education has to be narrow. So A levels are specialist, not generalist, exams, with few subjects taken, rather than the broad curriculum characteristic of Europe and the USA. Nowhere is this evident more than in maths – and for good reason. On the continent, many students post-16 carry on studying maths. In England, the reverse is the case. But the quality of the maths that the English sixth form studies is distinctive.

That manufacturing Empire, and the military engineering expertise that was required to safeguard its exports and imports, demanded high levels of mathematical competence. Because of the historic influence of the British universities, such as Cambridge and ICL, and their pre-eminence in scientific disciplines, something of this bias remains today.



Tim
Hands.

I’ve never met a mathematician who would not argue that A level maths and further maths were superior to anything you could get through the IB.

A levels, then, are a national system, a set of rules and constructs by which British educational culture has played up and played the game. As with any game, no one pretends that the rules or the referees are perfect. And just as modern cricket and rugby are subject to constant fiddling with the regulations and constant criticism of the conduct of the referees, so too our national educational system – albeit with a lot more justification – has attracted brickbats from armchair pundits, media experts and political headline seekers.

A levels are often criticised as narrow and we’ve seen why. But A levels are also criticised as limiting individual research and that does not need to be the case. The IB is justly praised for its extended essay, but the EPQ, whether examined or non-examined, now gives the A level student the same options, but uncribbed, uncabinned, unconfined.

A levels are also often criticised for their modularity, something which may be about to disappear, but at least one argument against modularity – the fatal blow it deals to the British summer and the playing and playing up of the British national game – can be raised with at least as much justification against the IB, which is all over for the upper sixth by the middle of May, just as willow and leather get knocked in for serious sporting discourse.

All this knowingly and provocatively risks sounding regressive, redolent of the cast of mind of the reactionary judge crying out in his cups to his colleagues: “Reform? Reform? Aren’t things bad enough already?” I have nothing against the IB – I pressed the button for its introduction alongside A levels in my previous school and would do the same again. Likewise, I have nothing against the Pre U, though its rarefaction may do our sector few favours. Nor am I blind to all the things that could be improved with A levels.

But there is a danger that we will simply conclude that what is new and European is necessarily and exclusively better than what is English and traditional. In this regard, there is a certain ironic piquancy in the simultaneous microcosmic crisis of confidence in the IB and the macrocosmic crisis of confidence in the Euro. In both cases there are issues about the real value of the currency (what will IB points entitle you to at university?) and about sovereignty (does John Bull really want our pupils’ academic welfare determined in Switzerland?).

Developing this international theme, the last word might appropriately go to Comrade Stalin: how many divisions has

Looking sideways

the Pope? In terms of sheer numbers, A levels far outgun any other exam. That brings its own messages. In terms of significant victories, the independent sector in recent times has only influenced national politics once. In 2002, concerns expressed by HMC about A level marking led directly to the resignation of the Secretary of State for Education, Estelle Morris, as fascinatingly revealed by R A W Rhodes in his recent *Everyday Life in British Government*. A levels give the independent sector much of its credibility and reputation.

So, independent schools should play to their strengths and should reform from within. We should listen to the messages from our histories and our systems. We should play up and we should not abandon the game. Other schools also have a right to the bat, the ball and the stumps and be warned, they have no intention of going home.

Tim Hands is the Master of Magdalen College School, Oxford.

The International Baccalaureate: not just a qualification

Julian Metcalf explains how the curriculum prepares students for university

The International Baccalaureate has built its reputation across the globe by providing students with an unparalleled, well-rounded international education that seeks to prepare them for the demands of an increasingly global society. Founded in Geneva in 1968 by a group of inspired teachers to provide a common curriculum for geographically mobile students, schools offer the IB Diploma for three main reasons:

1. As a widely recognised academic programme that is both a respected entry to university, and preparation for undergraduate study.
2. To promote international understanding, communication and intercultural competence in their students.
3. For students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and to educate the ‘whole’ person through community service and a ‘values’ education.

Sometimes misunderstood, the IB does more than ‘add breadth’. At Higher Level, the curriculum content has depth equivalent to A level. At Standard Level, most subjects deliver the same depth of analysis, just with reduced content; hence all six subjects are each worth 7 points. Moreover, the curriculum and assessment are free from political interference and grade inflation to ensure that the IB Diploma remains an independent benchmark. It has consistently held this status over the past 40 years.

All students also study a course in Theory of Knowledge, the epistemological heart of the IB Diploma; complete a 4000-word Extended Essay; and 150 hours of Creativity, Action and Service. The IB diploma is a programme that prepares students for university; it has unity, coherence and a mission statement at its heart. It is not ‘just a qualification.’

At Sevenoaks School, which has been offering the IB since 1978, Headteacher Katy Ricks comments: “The IB is established around a set of principles, core values and



qualities. It is a structured, rigorous and scholarly academic programme and there are certain elements that all students follow, but it is also very open and imaginative and there is flexibility for students to devise their own programmes.”

More than 90% of Sevenoaks School’s students earn places at their first choice university, in the UK and overseas, and the school has this year achieved a record 46 offers from Oxford and Cambridge for its IB students. Katy is confident this success is due to the IB Diploma.

It is testament to the IB’s strength that it has been so much copied and that other post-16 qualifications and frameworks have worked to emulate its structure and Extended Essay. However, the IB’s uniqueness comes from its ‘international’ approach and mission statement to develop ‘global citizens’ who understand ‘that others, with their differences, may also be right.’

Last summer, a record 4937 students sat the IB Diploma in the UK, half of them in independent schools. The UK average achieved was 33, comfortably above the World Average of 29.61, while independent schools achieved an average points score of 34.83 (35 is the HEFCE equivalent to AAB at A level) out of an IB maximum 45.

Approximately 3% of students in UK universities secured their places with the IB Diploma, although this figure is notably higher in the Russell Group universities. At Oxford, for example, IB applicants this year made up 5.8% of applicants and 7.8% of offers made. Indeed, the very nature of the IB Diploma, with its trans-disciplinary approach and Theory of Knowledge core helps students develop the skills required for the TSA and cognitive ability tests.

As Paul Teulon, head of admissions at King’s College, London, comments:

Research intensive universities are academically selective by their nature. We welcome applications from students

who have followed academically rigorous programmes of study which allow them to become independent learners and develop their intellectual curiosity.

Programmes of this kind will not only allow students to access the most competitive of programmes but also ensure that students make a smooth transition on to undergraduate study. The IB and other programmes of a similar nature are well suited to develop the types of skills required.

Research completed by Professors Vignoles and Green at the Institute of Education shows IB students outperform their A level peers at university and are 5.4% points more likely to achieve an upper second class degree or better. Their research also demonstrates that the average A level points score measured in UCAS points is 424, compared to an IB average points score of 36.5 for those students currently studying at Russell Group universities.

Schools' collective experience suggests that a student with 36 IB points or above typically finds it easier to attract an offer from a university than those with other qualifications. They have developed a wider portfolio of subject-specific, cognitive and 'personal' skills to offer to university admissions staff. Equally, the HEFCE cap on AAB students equates to 35 IB points, where students have the advantage of using standard level subjects and the core to add to their overall score, should they underachieve in one of their higher level subjects.

IB students equally have the advantage of early exam results (published on 5th July each year), allowing time to explore options, particularly useful with many university conditional offers now having a 31st August 'cut off' date. Moreover, in an increasingly mobile world, and given the introduction of £9000 tuition fees, students are starting to look overseas at university options where an international post-16 curriculum and qualification is a distinct advantage in opening up future pathways.

The IB is very firmly established in the independent sector and continues to attract interest from schools looking for a rigorous curriculum programme to offer in their sixth form. James Priory, Headmaster of The Portsmouth Grammar School, has commented:

We like to think about where our pupils are going to be at 25 and recognise that the IB is brilliant for developing the confidence and versatility that young people will need at this important stage in their lives. Since our first cohort of IB graduates left for university, we have had really good feedback from them about how they are coping with the demands of university degree courses, with many of them already achieving top grades in their first year. IB is not for everyone, however, and that is why we decided to offer a choice between A level and IB which has proved very attractive for our sixth formers.

The IB also offers alternatives to the UK national system at other levels: the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the curriculum framework for key stages 3 and 4. Moreover, the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) has diversified the IB's post-16 curriculum to open a professional pathway for students and can run comfortably alongside the IB DP.

The British exams system is narrow. Some argue its 'specialism' is its strength. However, few predict a future where mathematics will not be key, where modern languages will not be essential in a global marketplace, and where communication, adaptability and analytical thinking are not vital. The UK's national education system must prepare students to be competitive with their international peers.

Of course there is no such thing as a perfect education system – if there was we'd all be offering it. Instead, we must question *the purpose* of education in the sixth form: to get students *into* university, or to prepare them *for* it and their lives *beyond* it? Our schools are educating the future politicians, economists, business leaders and innovators on whom all our futures will rest. And no matter the field, they will be contributing to a global economy. Our current responsibilities therefore go far deeper than narrow specialism and inflated exam results.

Julian Metcalf is assistant head teacher at Dartford Grammar School and an IB alumnus of Sevenoaks.

HERE & THERE

BMS pupils to carry the Olympic torch

Two Bedford Modern School pupils, Marcus Burnett and Julie Rogers, have been chosen to be part of the Olympic Torch Bearing team for the 2012 London Olympics.

Marcus, who is 13 years old, was nominated because he has been a tower of strength and support to his younger brother, Jack, who is currently in Year 3 and was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in July 2007 and had to endure three years of chemotherapy. With the support of his family and friends, Marcus has helped to raise over £35,000 for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research.

Last year Jack was invited to meet Sir Ian Botham to help launch Beefy's Great British Walk 2012. The cricket legend has been walking to raise money for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research since 1977 and has raised over £12 million.

The Torch will be arriving in Bedford on Sunday, 8th July.



Jack Burnett with Sir Ian Botham.

Working in the parish of St Dionysius

Conference & Common Room interviews William Richardson, Secretary of HMC

What was the career path that led you to Market Harborough?

I think that the journey has been more of a bus route than a long-distance path. At various stops I have coincided with HMC schools. I was a pupil at Highgate. After a PhD in Tudor history I joined Unilever and, courtesy of Business in the Community, spent three days in a house with Eton sixth formers in the early 1980s trying to persuade them of the excitement of industrial management. For 25 years I worked in universities during which time the family backdrop kept me in touch with HMC schools (nephews and godchildren: Uppingham and King's, Canterbury).

However, most of my salaried work and interest during 1986-2011 was in vocational and work-related learning in schools and in further education, although 13 years as reviews editor at *History of Education* kept me abreast of changing scholarly interpretations of the achievements and legacies of fee-paying schools. Then, in 2009, Andrew Grant invited me to undertake research specific to HMC – on access to higher education in ‘strategic and vulnerable’ subjects. It was this, and the opportunity to present the work in the singular atmosphere of the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, that set me on a course to be interviewed as a possible successor to Geoff Lucas at HMC.

Is HMC as you expected?

In many ways it is. I anticipated meeting a good many highly able and effective leaders of schools and have not been disappointed in this expectation at all. I think that an interesting aspect of my closer acquaintance with HMC is appreciation of its culture of hospitality, even in these more pressured times. This is a trait that I believe ultimately derives from medieval sensibilities and it is a culture quite distinct from my extensive experience of maintained schools and colleges.

Yet the most striking realisation I have come to – seemingly self-evident but not, in fact, obvious to someone on the outside – is the unwavering commitment of HMC members to independence itself. Not only is this important (just what is the correct reach of the state in schooling?) but it is becoming surprisingly topical in England again now that the ideal of the catchment-based community school administered through local government, to which so many have clung intensely over the last five decades, is being dismantled at some speed.

How are you getting on with visiting the regions?

For many years the HMC officers group has spread itself across divisional meetings during the course of each year and I have tried to concentrate initially on those furthest from the office: Scotland, the north west and the south west, so far. I have also sought to get to a range of schools to talk to Heads, senior staff and pupils. To date, I have made

such visits to Edinburgh Academy, Eton, Fettes, Highgate, Manchester Grammar, Rugby, St Peter’s York, Taunton, UCS, Uppingham, Warwick and West Buckland.

Meanwhile, as result of decisions taken by HMC Committee over the last 18 months or so, there is more work to do than previously in managing the HMC office in Leicestershire. With Melanie Horsborough leading HMCPD and Heidi Salmons bringing a new professionalism to our communications, Ian Power and I are seeking to consolidate HMC as a leading voice in UK independent education.

My own view is that wherever possible it is the members rather than the salaried staff who should speak. And because each Head is personally independent in outlook, yet has come into association with others, we should not seek a dull uniformity when advancing our views. Coherence of vision, yes. Well-informed and critical judgment, yes. But not a monotone. HMC schools, and groups of like-minded schools, are too interesting for that.

What role do you see for ISC in the future?

The three core activities that Barnaby Lenon and Matthew Burgess are leading at ISC are absolutely the right ones: press and media, lobbying and legal affairs, and research intelligence. Moreover, Barry Martin and I (the two HMC-nominated directors on the ISC board) have been struck by the clarity and industry that is going into each of these. We receive regular activity reports from the ISC staff at board meetings and these reflect a purposeful and hard-working organisation.

What did you make of the Conference – are you a golfer?

There was much to enjoy at the Conference in St Andrews: a spacious hotel with large windows; a bracing environment with wide horizons; and an interesting programme. In particular, I thought that Ken Durham’s speech was extremely good and it is always inspiring to see pupils performing expertly – so the pipe band and the youngsters who played at the Society of Heads (SHMIS) reception were highlights, also.

Meanwhile, I have found it interesting that several guests of HMC who were at St Andrews and whom I have met since have suggested, in different ways, that the Conference stands out as different from equivalent events. Or, indeed, that there isn’t an equivalent event in the education calendar. Perhaps this is a corporate expression of the values of independence and hospitality which I have already mentioned. And, on a final note that is closer to home, I thought that the Conference support provided by Denise and Sue from the Market Harborough office was superb.

I like crazy golf very much and am quite expert at it (home course: Exmouth).

What do you see as the main challenges facing HMC and the Independent Sector in the next five years?

In order, I believe these to be: adjusting to a significant gear-change in the UK economy; working hard to articulate the values (and, if necessary, the definition) of independent education and why this matters both to those who participate in it and those who do not; countering wherever it occurs and with sound evidence the rampant stereotyping to which the sector is subjected (not least by some of its supporters!); and pursuing HMC priorities in a spirit of empathy with other educational communities and institutions, and with understanding of the challenges they face.

Some of these priorities will need to be advanced in the public policy sphere. These are likely to include patrolling the performance of awarding bodies; explaining to a range of audiences our commitment to and expertise in assessment of pupils' learning; and scrutinising how the 'selecting' universities are adhering to the principle of 'fair access' in their admissions.

Is the Coalition good, bad or indifferent for independent schools?

School-level education will always be political in a society such as ours. From my perspective, current UK Coalition politics has seen a relatively minor intensification of the eternal power struggle of politics: 'who gets what, when and how?' The freedom of HMC schools from resource-dependency on the state is their greatest asset and, if independence in education means anything, it means playing a long game. Vice Chancellors: please note.

Has the Upper Tribunal (Charities Commission) ruling really changed anything?

Yes it has – and not just for schools, according to some legal commentary, but for charity law more widely. In our profession, the judgment that it is for each board of trustees (governors) to determine appropriate forms of public benefit



*William
Richardson.*

accessible to those deemed 'poor' is an important clarification of the locus of such responsibility. Recent correspondence from the Prime Minister to HMC has specifically acknowledged this.

And, as if we needed reminding, this underscores the wider point that in a period of major economic dislocation there is an even greater premium on the skills-mix and competence of each governing body to steer a sound, viable and principled course for its school.

Looking back

David Levin recalls a year of challenge and opportunity

I have been asked to reflect on my year as Chairman of HMC, a role I wanted for a number of reasons related to events at the time. The particular context was an interesting one politically, after years of government 'sorties' into our world and with an election impending.

Furthermore the sector's own collective body, the Independent Schools' Council (ISC), seemed to have seriously lost its way, to the detriment of the member associations. There was also the continuing need to promote new methods for able pupils to access the academic excellence of our schools.

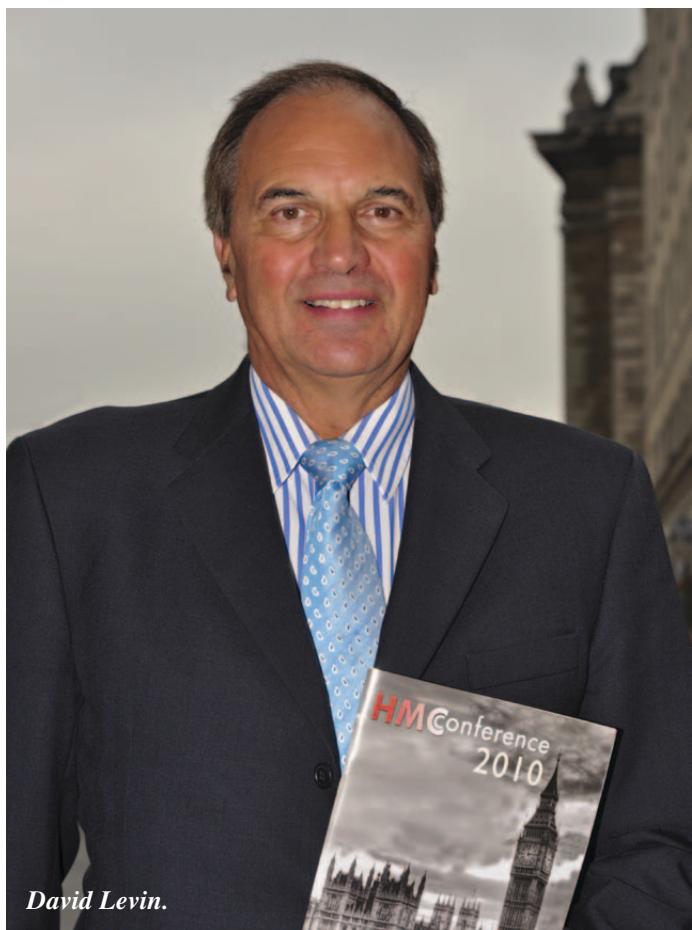
Two other aspects also motivated me. Having previously been a ministerial advisor, I genuinely believed that that experience might be useful for HMC. Thus I tried, both during my year and since, to ensure that HMC 'plays' at the highest level of government.

This meant bringing the Minister to my HMC Conference in London, ensuring that HMC Heads continue to meet him regularly and implanting HMC's role in Academies at the highest level. Thus David Cameron chaired our key meeting with the Education Minister on Independent Schools sponsorship of Academies at Downing Street in 2011.

The final dimension of my motivation in standing for the Chairmanship was the diversity of our organisation itself. The word 'diversity' has a history of pejorative, New Labour-derived distortions of meaning in its recent usage. In my reference, I mean quite simply that HMC comprises members who run a range of different schools.

Most of the 250 HMC members have day pupils; just over 100 have boarders. Very few of us are now single sex boys-only

Interview



David Levin.

schools and fewer run schools without Preps than those with junior school pupils. Our schools range in size from over 1000 to under 300 pupils and our school structures of governors and ownership are significantly varied.

Self-scrutiny for HMC, it seemed to me, was both a necessary precursor to dealing with external threats and, at the same time, the starting point for perpetuating HMC strengths. In the programming of the year and, even more importantly in the execution of the key campaigns, I was greatly assisted by the knowledge, enthusiasm and experience of Geoff Lucas and Ian Power.

By the summer of 2010 it had become only too clear that ISC's then current operation could not continue. It had expanded its staff to over 20; only a minority of the board had education backgrounds; and it was intent on expanding its remit. It had established a commercial subsidiary to run conferences that had generated a £750,000 loss. Subscriptions were going up and up and up. HMC were scheduled to pay £620,000 to ISC in its 2010/2011 subscription.

HMC's campaign for change brought about the resignation of the entire ISC board following the threat of a withdrawal of all HMC schools. The positive result was a reform that ensured that ISC, once again, pursues its original objectives – lobbying, press relations and provision of legal advice. The organisation is now working closely and cohesively with Heads.

The campaign of 2010/11 was intensive, lasting throughout the year. It encompassed extensive consultation with HMC members, two ballots of HMC members – one to withdraw and one to rejoin ISC. Throughout, we worked closely with the other Heads' associations. The year culminated in the selection of a new Chairman of ISC, Barnaby Lenon, who has transformed the operational culture.

Looking back at my year as Chairman of HMC, I am especially proud of our success in launching the SIV Campaign to create sixth form bursary places for maintained school pupils in strategic, important and vulnerable subjects including maths, physics, chemistry and modern foreign languages. My HMC colleagues created 72 such places which, I am confident, will transform the educational and career opportunities for a number of able students as well as benefiting Britain's culture and economy.

If it weren't for independent schools, these subjects would have all but disappeared from UK schools; HMC commissioned research from Exeter University that shows conclusively that independent schools are the mainstay of these subjects for prestigious UK universities.

People often ask how it is possible to balance the HMC Chairman's role with running a large school. For me, there was relatively little stress, mostly because I was fortunate to have at City of London School an excellent senior management team and executive assistant to whom I was able to delegate.

Technology, too, has been my friend: an iPhone means I am always in administrative contact. I benefited too from an outstanding HMC office, in which Geoff Lucas, Ian Power, Sue Gray and Denise Bennett provided immense collective experience and effective administrative support. Finally I am lucky to work in central London, since many of the HMC meetings take place a mere 20 minutes away from my school.

During my tenure, I championed two causes; Primary Academies and Open Access. I believe that HMC should continue to make a significant contribution to education outside its own schools. Research has proven that the attainment gap between rich and poor widens exponentially between the ages of three and 11. Indeed by Year 6 the disparity is so great that the differences cannot be made good during the secondary stage of a child's education.

I am convinced that the primary sector is where independent schools can make the greatest difference and this should be a major priority of ours. The riots of last August were a signal of the despair experienced by many of our fellow citizens. As a South African, I am genuinely alarmed at the increasing 'ghettoisation' of our cities. Whether it be partnerships, Academy sponsorship or straight-forward help with teaching and learning, HMC schools can contribute to the primary school sector.

The Open Access campaign is a work in progress. I have teamed up with Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust, to campaign for the introduction of Open Access so that as many HMC/GSA day schools as possible can accept any child who gains admission to their schools irrespective of the parents' ability to pay. The government would fund those parents who cannot afford the fees.

Some progress has been made. Sir Peter, the office holders of HMC, GSA and the Forum for Independent Day Schools (FIDS) and I recently met with the Secretary of State for Education and we all agreed to keep talking.

If I could pass on any advice to future Chairmen it would be this. Listen carefully to the wisdom and advice of HMC officers when Chairman Designate; engage then also with the Chairman so that as much continuity as possible is ensured when you take over; and listen to the concerns of the membership. I wish all my successors all the very best in the role.

David Levin has been Headmaster of City of London School since 1999.

Sampling the American dream

Maddi Power paints the town Carolina Blue

Getting off the plane after eight hours spent trying not to kill the seven-year-old North Carolinian sat next to me who, within 20 minutes, had ‘stolen’ my brand new iPad, I thought to myself: this is going to be easy. After all, I’d spent two years at King’s College London, and two ill-fated terms at Oxford before; how could I be scared of four months in a tiny college town in North Carolina? I understood how universities worked.

But, after two weeks of solid work (up to now an unknown concept for me as an arts student) my blasé attitude had turned to mild panic. Why was I 4000 miles away from home struggling to keep up with reading, surrounded by smiling Americans dressed entirely in a particular shade of blue? And you know what? I really needed a cup of tea!

The thing is American universities are nothing like their English equivalent. Stepping out of the car on that first day, I felt as if I had entered a film set. Now this is not an entirely novel experience. After all, The King’s College Strand Campus is often used for filming, but UNC is just like the typical American College movie set. Green quads, leafy trees with the obligatory philosophy major sitting underneath lost in thought, and thousands of smiling fresh-faced healthy



Maddi Power.

Americans (where were the obese citizens that were meant to make up a third of the population?).

Now, after a day or two there, what became very apparent was that these smiling (always smiling) fresh-faced healthy American students were all wearing the same clothes. ‘Sneakers’ were paired with jeans (or, God forbid, khaki

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.

City of London School’s Royal visitor

City of London School is celebrating 25 years since the opening of the current School buildings, and was honoured to host a visit by The Princess Royal to commemorate this event.

The Princess toured the school, watched an extract from the school play in the Winterflood Theatre and presided over an assembly, addressed by David Levin, the Headmaster, and the Lord Mayor of London. She also visited the refurbished science laboratories and inspected a parade of cadets from the school’s CCF.

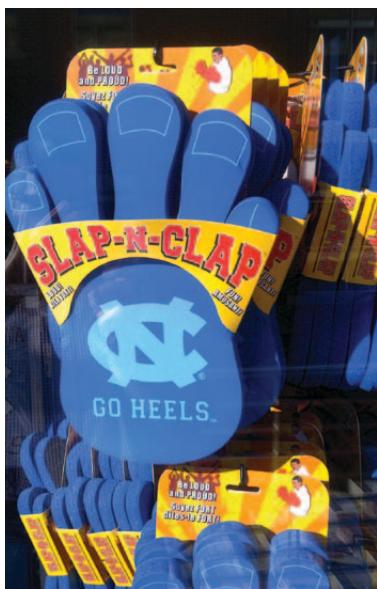
Her Royal Highness unveiled a plaque to mark her visit. Located in the Concourse, it sits next to the plaque which she herself unveiled in 1987 when opening the then new buildings. This provides a nice link with the history of the school, which traces its origins to a bequest in 1442 by John Carpenter.

The architect for the school buildings in Queen Victoria Street was Thomas Meddings, a senior architect with the Corporation of London and an Old Boy of the school. By using a structural grid, the design made it relatively easy to change the internal layout, but a distinctly challenging feature of the commission was a road tunnel running through the middle of the site!

Meddings had been a chorister at the Temple Church, rising to be head chorister and the leading soloist of a choir made famous by Ernest Lough, another CLS pupil. He also sang at the Coronation of The Princess Royal’s grandfather, King George VI, in 1937.



Looking out



Carolina Blue.

others, especially neighbouring Duke and NC State.

Walking through Raleigh at night with UNC students *still* dressed in their blue uniform, I felt a bit like an extra in *West Side Story*. But, to be fair to the smiling fresh-faced American students, they've got a lot of reasons to be proud. The *Times Higher Education* ranked them 43rd in the world this year, and you might just have heard of one of their basketball playing alumni, Michael Jordan...

So, with this reputation for excellence both on and off the court, it is only natural that the workload reflects this. And American students work. No they really work. I've never met such dedicated students in my life (and most of my friends were English majors). Apparently, at UNC, most students pull at least one all-nighter a week. And, after two weeks there, it was easy to see why: most students take five modules per semester and in each they will have a minimum of three hours teaching a week. Work is assessed on a weekly basis with regular short papers, pop quizzes, presentations *etc.*

In fact, in one class I ended up making mince pies for over a hundred people! On top of all that, out of the five classes they take, only one is likely to be from their major. One of the girls I met (in a folklore class of all places) was a sports science major taking anatomy, linguistics, French, folklore and philosophy modules!

They work, and they work hard. Evidence of just how much they work can be found around Finals when the dining hall introduced midnight breakfasts and the student union installed a free Red Bull vending machine that sold out in 30 minutes!

Despite the intensity of the work, the focus is completely different from that of English universities. Instead of private study and further research, information is thrown at you from every direction to be regurgitated in your Finals; one of my fellow study-abroad students remarked that it was like doing GCSEs again.

This was something that I found very frustrating until it was pointed out to me that most students would go on to attend Grad school. It seems that American universities, instead of being the end of most students' education like it is in the UK, are actually the beginning. It is as an undergrad that you learn as much as possible about as much as you can, before narrowing your focus at Grad school.

Now, despite my English reserve and my awareness of

'pants') and a blue T-shirt. But it wasn't just any blue T-shirt; oh no, it was a Carolina Blue T-shirt.

American students are very proud of their colleges, and this is particularly evident at UNC. At the student stores you can buy UNC branded clothes, pens, medical scrubs, Christmas decorations, boxers, baby clothes, the list goes on and on. Apparently UNC merchandise is one of the most popular throughout the entire country. But, as they love their college, they violently hate all

local peculiarities, I must say that I think American campus universities are actually rather amazing. The level of pastoral care is, I believe, unparalleled. For all my moaning about sharing a room and living in a dorm, it was wonderful to know that 24 hours a day there is a bus you can call to pick you up anywhere on campus or within the town (and it's free!) or security people who spend their nights walking around campus in case you're scared of walking back to your dorm alone.

But most amazing, and perhaps shocking, is the attitude of the professors. They want to help their students. Now this may sound unfair: I know many professors in the UK who take a deep interest in their students' wellbeing, but would one really reply to an email an hour after you sent it, and agree to come in on their day off to discuss your essay? And this was my English professor, who couldn't have been younger than 65!

As I come to the end of this article, my brain is bombarded with more and more that I want to say, but I just don't have the space. I didn't even get to mention the food! But to be honest, if I started to write about the food I would not have mentioned anything else – hush puppies – you just have to try them! There's just so much to say because at American universities you don't just attend class there: you live there, you work there and you play there. It's a well-rounded, all-consuming experience that can overwhelm you if you don't throw yourself fully into it, but well worth it, especially if you plan to do further study.

Maddi Power is in her third year at King's College London studying Comparative Literature. Each year up to 30 King's College students have the opportunity to spend a semester at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

The Pierian Spring?





*Mark
Leppard.*

When inspectors call

Mark Leppard describes a beneficial way round inspection overload

Education is a very hot topic in Qatar and one in which the country, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, is investing a huge amount of financial resources. This imaginative and forward-thinking programme is designed to ensure that this oil and gas rich country will have a knowledge-based economy well beyond the life expectancy of its natural resources.

Doha College is one of the oldest schools in Qatar, with a very strong pedigree and over 30 years' experience of delivering high quality education. The college is a not-for-profit establishment under the sponsorship of the British Embassy, and alumni attend universities all over the world, including Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and Princeton.

Confident of the very high standards it sets, the college is justifiably proud of the achievements of its students. However, in this day and age, there are huge pressures for a school to be measured by external organisations. The difficulty for any international school is to ensure that the accrediting or inspecting body will capture the true context of what goes on every day, during the short time period an accreditation affords.

Many international schools have a student body made up of over 50 nationalities, the majority of whom wish to embrace local cultures, whilst bringing a strong bond from their own country of origin together with a deep understanding of internationalism.

There is a unique flavour of student backgrounds which can be very difficult to capture through a single inspection or accreditation. As a consequence, international schools looking for a comprehensive analysis of their work may choose to undertake a number of different accreditations or inspections over a period of time.

The challenge with such an approach is that the pressure on the school community is immense and can lead to all involved feeling that they are continually preparing for external evaluation. Clearly, the intention is that inspections cause minimal disruption, but any Head will tell you that such visitors do impact upon the normal day. Regardless of how well one is prepared, we all experience some anxiety during an 'inspection week'.

To avoid the feeling of constant inspection, Doha College took an alternative approach and undertook three, yes three, separate accreditations and inspections during the same week, and the purpose of this was to capture the true context of the college by getting a simultaneous view from three different angles.

As Doha College is an outstanding international school, we recognised the need for an external body to review and report upon the standards of the college. After due consideration, we opted for the Council of International Schools (CIS) who have a global commitment to setting high standards for international education.

In order to highlight the work of the college within the region in which we primarily function, we undertook accreditation with the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME), which was carried out by Penta International.

Furthermore, as Doha College follows the National Curriculum of England, it seemed logical to incorporate within our international recognition a body that would compare our standards to those in UK. Consequently, we opted for the new British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection that was launched in 2011 by the United Kingdom government, again undertaken by a Penta International Team.

The inspection week itself was very interesting with the two accreditation teams plus an inspecting body having access to every part of the college, from classrooms and common rooms to assemblies and parent forums. With staff waiting to meet or be observed by members of the visiting teams, there was an almost tangible buzz about the place.

A vital part of the week's success was having a specific person from the college overseeing the whole process from initiation through to conclusion. This process was led by one of our vice principals who, having initially contacted the organisations to voice interest, guided all involved right through to the receiving of the final reports.

The lead needs to have an overview of the whole school and be a strong communicator, with the skill to empower people to drive their particular area. As the week itself is a culmination of many months of preparation, clear and timely communication with students, staff, parents and governors throughout the build-up is crucial. With clear and careful guidance, involving people in the process helps to avoid surprises and gets everyone on board in respect of the challenges that lie ahead.

When compiling the initial pre-inspection report – along the lines of a UK style SEF – the self-analysis that takes place is extremely informative and gives the school a clear direction for improvement, regardless of whether an inspection is taking place. With three separate accreditation and inspection teams assessing this, each with a slightly different focus,

Looking out

the analysis undertaken by the school can be far more in depth and overarching. Again, this gives the school a unique opportunity to look at itself in real detail.

In recommending such an approach to fellow Heads, I would encourage you to get the separate visiting teams to start a dialogue with one another. This ensures that everybody is comfortable with the process, understands each other's remit and provides an opportunity to share documentation, saving the school time on producing three separate versions of the same information.

We agreed from the outset with CIS, BSME and BSO that the purpose of their visit was school improvement and that evidence, regardless of what template it was on, was evidence. All three teams therefore worked very well together, making the whole process even more worthwhile and, ultimately, strengthening the educational experience we are able to provide.

With three teams in place, classroom observations were extensive. Although this can cause understandable anxiety, if you have excellent staff this is an opportunity for them to showcase their skills. Interestingly, when the week was over, I actually had staff come to me expressing their disappointment that they were only observed once! Again, managing staff expectation throughout the process is important, as well as reassuring them that there really is little to be concerned about.

Having recently 'survived' this experience of three simultaneous inspections, I would strongly recommend this model to any international Head who is considering multiple accreditations/inspections. Although at first it may appear both daunting and labour intensive, there is clearly considerable common ground amongst accreditation bodies, and much of what one may be looking for another will also be seeking.

There are also huge efficiencies for all parties involved. Additionally, if the school can encourage the accreditation/inspection bodies to liaise with one another in advance of the visit, the teams can work co-operatively in a supportive manner. It was certainly our experience that CIS, BSME and BSO worked extremely well together.

So, did we benefit from the experience of three separate accreditations and inspections being carried out at the same time? Most definitely. Would we recommend others following a similar route? Most definitely. Would we do it again? Most definitely, but not for a few years!

Mark Leppard is Principal of Doha College.

If anyone is thinking of, or planning, a similar route and would like further details, please contact seniorexec@dohacollege.com

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.



Mary Ireland with Julien Anani-Isaac and Mike Lynch.



Peter Scott, Peter Southern and Mary Ireland.

Bancroft's School launches foundation to increase scholarships

Old Bancroftians, members of staff, parents and school governors came together to celebrate the launch of the Bancroft's Foundation in the beautiful surroundings of the Drapers' Hall. Bancroft's School has a tradition of giving opportunities to talented children of all backgrounds and, to mark the School's 275th anniversary, the Foundation has been established to provide more means-tested scholarships to bright children regardless of their families' financial situations.

Old Bancroftian Dr Mike Lynch OBE, lead Patron of the Foundation, spoke about his own experiences at Bancroft's and of his support for the Foundation. Julien Anani-Isaac, Old Bancroftian and Scholar, currently studying at Worcester College, Oxford spoke of how his scholarship had impacted his school career. "I will always be grateful for the opportunities that I received at Bancroft's ... surrounded by teachers who believed in my potential, and had the chance to explore and discover new things."

The Foundation has already received over £1.2 million in gifts and commitments and welcomed the first two Foundation Scholars this academic year. A further four Scholars will begin at Bancroft's in September 2012.

The importance of partnership

Alys Langdale reports on a challenging conference seeking global links

Teaching young people from HMC schools about the world around them is a fantastic privilege and yet a considerable challenge. As a geography teacher, I would argue that there is nothing more important and, of course, my subject allows plenty of opportunity for this – our IGCSE and IB curricula are now global in emphasis and the study of ‘place’ is in every course, every lesson.

But the *understanding* of place and its people can too often be confined to the textbooks and files – in spite of the integration of socio-economic considerations, energetic teaching and intellectually curious pupils. ‘Place’ can bear relevance to young people as a section of the syllabus or a holiday destination perhaps, but may not be integral to their lives and only thinly relevant to their future careers and decision-making.

Pupils at Marlborough College talk about living in the ‘Marlborough Bubble’ where, within these walls, this is our entire world. Some might say, “so what”? In this time of extreme examination pressure, with the economic pinch on our leavers (and their parents), the job market is becoming increasingly competitive. Surely the right thing to do for our pupils is to get our heads down, teach effectively and ensure exam success to secure places on competitive courses at universities.

Well, of course we must do that. But that is not an education: it is simply a list of outcomes. Our role as educators must be so much more. The parent body expects us – and we ourselves hope – to produce some of the leaders of tomorrow: from members of NGOs to local and government politicians, captains of industry and public servants.

Never before has educating young people about the world outside the independent school ‘bubble’ been more important

and more relevant. We fail our pupils if they do not have a profound understanding of the background global context to the world in which they live; the food they eat; the clothes they wear; the people sitting next to them on the underground and in their place of work.

The newly developed HMC Global Partnership Group understands and explores how we learn through partnership with others – conversations and shared experiences alongside a mutual understanding that we share common if variant goals. Partnership with people in other parts of the world can educate in a way that no syllabus can predict or dictate. And genuine partnership can change lives.

With this in mind, in 2010 Gardner Thompson of Dulwich College organised the inaugural HMC Africa Schools conference. Following its success, the second conference was held in 2011 at Oundle School, run by Ian Clark. The third conference, renamed the HMC Global Partnership Conference, was held at Marlborough College on Tuesday, 21st February, 2012.

Interest from HMC schools in global partnerships and communities projects in the south and worldwide is growing apace. Eighty delegates from 40 HMC schools and other organisations attended, travelling from Belfast, Leeds, Ipswich and many in-between. There is a hunger for greater understanding, to share experience, to ask for advice and to offer support.

Also evident was the wealth of information that has already been developed by others: HMC schools form just one constituency in education in this country amongst many with similar interests. It is clear that the HMC schools could learn a great deal from the state sector, in which it is estimated that some 4000 schools have partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America



A meeting of minds on common ground.

Looking out

and Caribbean, and other nationally managed school and community linking organisations.

The Marlborough conference followed two main themes: what we mean by ‘Partnership’ and ‘Representation/Voices from the South’. Alongside this there was an emphasis on curriculum linking and practical tips for establishing partnerships. We were extremely fortunate to have as the keynote speaker Richard Dowden, Director of the Royal African Society and author of *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. He challenged and inspired. In particular, during his address he urged delegates to examine exactly where the balance lay in the ‘partnership’ they held abroad. Where does the power in the relationship lie?

The conference heard from a range of speakers and organisations directly involved with linking projects; BUILD and UKOWLA were represented and Sharon Leftwich-Lloyd from The Polesworth School, Tamworth, delivered an inspiring account of current linking projects in Ghana, India and China. She challenged us all to take that step to turn ideas into reality, but also to realise that partnership projects should not be simply an extra-curricular activity or a school trip but should be integrated into the backbone of the curriculum.

Genuine partnership must involve a meeting of minds on common ground: the thirst for education in itself could be that common ground. Casimir Chanda (Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund) had the challenge as the final speaker and ‘Inspiring Voice from the South’ to send us all back to our schools and homes with renewed purpose and determination. ‘Together We Achieve More’ was her parting note and this could not have been more appropriate for our HMC Global Partnership Conference.

Following the Oundle 2011 Conference I became the chair of the inaugural HMC Global Partnerships steering group. The motivation for the group surrounded the understanding that an annual meeting had great value, but also that HMC schools, if they work together, could offer a genuine service to others involved with partnership projects. The steering group agreed upon three main aims and would provide a central point for guidance for UK schools; lobbying representation to UK government; and an access point to HMC schools for schools from the south.

With this in mind, we have developed a website and a challenge to HMC schools to work together. The web address is www.hmcglobalpartnership.org

The site has been developed at Marlborough College but you will find no College branding. The only ‘linking’ logo is that of the HMC. The site will be available on the Marlborough College website and every delegate at the conference was challenged to add the link to their websites. Take a look and then, please, send details of your projects, location and the nature of your work.

Together, we believe HMC schools can achieve more. We shall see very quickly exactly how much HMC schools are genuinely doing to educate the leaders of tomorrow to understand the global context in which they work.

Alys Langdale is deputy head of sixth form at Marlborough College.

HERE & THERE

The Duke of Kent Visits Caterham School

HRH The Duke of Kent visited Caterham School in February to unveil a plaque commemorating the opening of the refurbished cricket pavilion. During his visit the Duke attended a performance by the school orchestra and choir of the school’s Bicentenary Anthem, composed by



the director of music, Stuart Thompson. The Circus Club gave an entertaining display of circus skills and the CCF put on a varied display of outdoor skills.

The refurbished pavilion will be known as the Leathem Pavilion in memory of Terry Leathem, Headmaster from 1950 to 1973. It has been refurbished by the school, assisted by donations from the Old Caterhamians’ Association and the Parents Association. In addition to sports facilities, the pavilion includes state of the art workspaces for art and drama.

“We are honoured that His Royal Highness could find time in his busy schedule to visit the school and open the new pavilion. I am delighted that we are able to celebrate the bicentenary year with a project that will support students in both sport and the creative arts,” said Headmaster Julian Thomas.



Body and Soul

John Newton has established a snappy new interview format for *Conference & Common Room* with some firm ground rules.

'The aim of the exercise is to give an insight into the life of Heads. You are a fascinating lot and that should be celebrated. The questionnaire is below. As I explained, please give pithy responses, with as few subordinate clauses as possible, to the questions below. Do not feel you should compromise yourself in any way. If you are uncomfortable with a question because I am trespassing on sensitive terrain, please indicate and I will omit both question and response. On the other hand, wit is always welcome.'

His fourth subject is Emma Taylor.

1. Name, school and number of years in post.

Emma Taylor, Christ College Brecon, five

2. The working day

Do you start early or go late? Why?

I start early – because I often wake up at 4 or 5am. Strangely, this has only happened since I became a Head...

Is the desk a sea of paper or a tranquil pool of ordered tasks?

Absolute chaos most of the time, until I go out for the day and my angelic PA imposes order.

Give two key principles about how you manage time.

I have some routines that ensure I spend enough time with pupils – walkabouts post chapel, shadowing individuals and so on. These have now become second nature. I also keep an evening a week blocked out in the diary to spend with my long-suffering husband – I can't say it always survives the school calendar, but I try.

When the pressure is on do you:

Take a bath

Take a walk

Take a pill

Other (please specify)

Seek out something involving pupils – often watching matches or joining the lunch queue. That restores my sanity and often involves fresh air and a change of scene, too.

Do you talk it out or hold it in? Who to? How?

Talk it out. This was a real problem at the start – I relied on friends from former schools and especially my own former HM, who was a wonderful mentor. Now I talk to the chairman, who is very supportive, and to senior colleagues, or to the chaplain, where appropriate. I meet for lunch once every few weeks with a former colleague who is now also an HM – we reassure each other by sharing stories and realizing the issues are much the same for both of us.

What is the most precious, and most villainous, object in your study?

Most precious – a wall of memorabilia from 20 years of teaching. Most villainous – the computer, which threatens to rule my life utterly unless ruthlessly suppressed.

Do you have a Blackberry, iPhone etc? If so, describe your attitude towards it.



John
Newton.

I have an iPhone ... pretty essential to the job and full of Apps installed by my children. Like all means of communication, it is neutral in itself – it's the content of the messages that can lead to delight or despair.

3. Nurturing the mind

What newspaper do you read? Which sections do you spend most time on?

The Times – I am ashamed to say the crossword!

What sort of literature do you read in the term?

I always read at night – a Pavlovian requirement since childhood. I have eclectic tastes but nearly always modern novels in term time.

And the holidays?

I like to get stuck into some philosophical or political reading – something a bit more challenging. I like popular science books, too – Simon Singh is a favourite.

What are your tastes in the arts? How do they affect you?

I love music and theatre, and I have a daughter who acts and sings, which gives me an excuse to go to things with her. I am easily moved by both and have hankies at the ready.

If you have Sky+, what do you have on series link?

University Challenge.

You are given a six month sabbatical to write a book.

What would it be about?

Generalism versus specialism – with Renaissance man or woman as the hero/ine.

4. Feeding the soul...

How important is the spiritual life to you? Explain your response.

Absolutely critical but I have never been good at solitary prayer or reflection, so I seek out other Christians to pray and think with.

What is your favoured charity? Do you work with them in any capacity?

Winston's Wish – no, but try to promote their cause where I can.

If relevant, what was your last sermon about?

Epiphany – with reference to the Magi, Frank Capra, Dickens and Steve Jobs.

Looking out



Emma Taylor.

5. Training the body

Do you get your five-a-day?

Yes – mostly via the school kitchen

How often do you exercise? What do you do?

I'm rubbish at that – vestige of being picked last every week for netball at school. I walk a good bit, though.

In the holidays how much do you travel and where do you prefer to go?

Recently to our cottage in west Wales whenever we can, but, being married to a linguist, France and Spain also have a magnetic pull.

Your chair says you are tired and insists you do one of the following; which one would you choose:

Have a massage

Have a sauna

Have a posh meal

Have a weekend by the sea

Probably the weekend away, but where is the shopping option?

6. Relationships

Which person, alive or dead, fictitious or real would you like to meet?

Jesus – no question.

Who has been the key influence on your life?

My father – he died when I was 11 but I think I've been trying to impress him ever since.

Who would you least like to invite to dinner?

Can't think of anyone; pretty well everyone is interesting company to me.

To whom would you most like to give a piece of your mind?
Richard Dawkins.

7. Do you have any unorthodox ambitions? If yes, please specify:

I'd love to master Welsh, but haven't made much headway in five years!

HERE & THERE

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Latymer' Outstanding Teacher

Latymer Upper School is delighted to announce that David Baker has been awarded The Outstanding Teacher of Design Technology by The Design and Technology Association.

David is the originator and driving force behind two successful ventures concerned with design education. The first, Design Camp, is a Community Links project funded jointly by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council.

It has been running for four years and provides a week-long programme of hands-on workshops for secondary school pupils to design, explore, create and make. The particular strength of this project is that the workshops are devised and led by practising designers.

The second programme which David has founded is Design Club, which grew out of Design Camp, runs on Saturdays during term time, and is for Year 10 and 11 pupils who love all things design-related. The pupils come from state and independent schools in the Hammersmith and Fulham area. Most are studying Design and Technology as one of their GCSEs.

David started his career as a practising architect and ran his own firm before deciding to retrain as a teacher. He joined Latymer Upper School's design technology department in 2003 and is a much admired member of the department.

Cranmer's treasure trove

Fredrik Arvidsson celebrates the original little red book

I remember when I first arrived at King's Canterbury ten years ago and got the standard letter from the local Bishop stating his terms and conditions for visits to parishes and schools to conduct baptism and confirmation services. It talked about the new Common Worship, rolling out all the sales talk about the exciting new liturgy, and there was a small line at the end of his Episcopal letter saying some might still want to use the *Book of Common Prayer*.

I organised and prepared my group of 80 candidates and sent the service that I had created to his Domestic Chaplain for his perusal. When I went to the Bishop's office to talk about the great day of 80 youngsters entering the church in full membership, I thought I might get a pat on the back in a world looking for numbers and bringing the youth to Christ.

But, instead of a greeting smile and a "well done, what a superb number you have this year", I heard "Fredrik", in a rather unapproving sort of voice, "What is this? *The Book of Common Prayer*? Are you mad?"

"I'm sorry, I don't understand. You said in your letter we could chose the BCP service," I replied.

"It's only there because it is part of the Church's traditional liturgy; I didn't think people would choose the ruddy thing. I will be grinding my teeth during the peace, knowing very well there is none," the Bishop said.

I left thinking 'there goes my diocesan career'. But a small voice said, "If it is good enough for the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, it must be good enough for the Bishop of Dover," as I had just picked up a Confirmation service sheet from St James's Palace.

As the Senior Chaplain of the oldest public school in England dating back to 597AD, I have inherited a rich and wonderful tradition. This is especially so for our pupils, as Archbishop Rowan reminded them in the Cathedral of which we are all a part: "The Cathedral Precinct is an amazing place and it is a wonderful heritage just by the air that you breathe or the ground that you walk on. *The Book of Common Prayer* remains a deeply valuable spiritual resource for people of all ages. It offers a wealth of words and images to deepen prayer and enrich imagination, and I am delighted to see younger people having the opportunity of experiencing this richness."

It is a great mistake to throw out a treasure which has meant so much to so many generations, but some clergy can't wait to bin it or are worried that, by using it, they will be seen to be living in the past or damaging their hopes of preferment. I would encourage parish clergy and school chaplains who are looking to make changes to bring back a *BCP* service.

There are so many un-churched people out there who are not baptised or confirmed and who feel excluded by a church



Fredrik Arvidsson.

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which celebrates Eucharist after Eucharist every Sunday. Why not try a Sung Matins at the main service on a Sunday morning with a great sermon followed by a parish lunch? The result might surprise you. I did this when I was the rector of a country parish and we doubled our numbers in six months. Finding a sung Parish Matins in some Dioceses is like finding hens' teeth.

There are so many ways of using this wonderful liturgy with young people, not changing one of Cranmer's words. I have often asked the pupils if they would like to look at other modes of worship, but as soon as we speak of change they get a bit edgy. Why? Their constant use of computers, mobiles,

Looking out

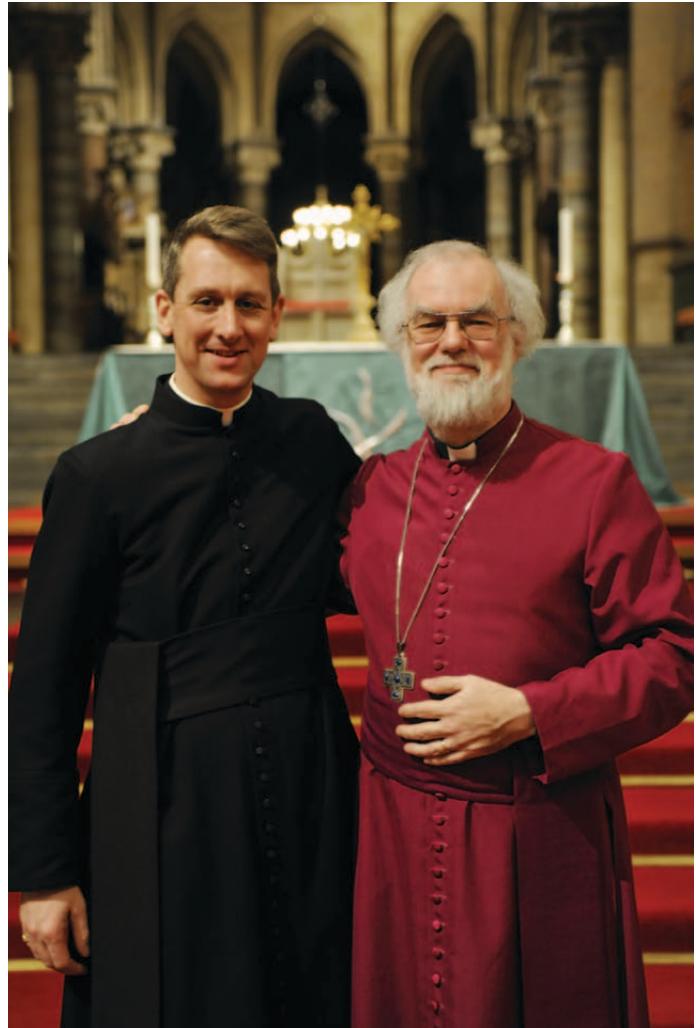
Facebook, Twitter, TV, Sky *etc* means that they live in a fast world and they would like some things to be stable.

They need and want a sense of belonging and mystery and they can find it in the *Book of Common Prayer*. You don't need to go out and buy colourful crystals and light joss sticks or have the vicar cover himself in ash like a Sadhu to be mysterious. Young people are asking for and need dignified worship, but it must be done well, with an engaging sermon.

I have the privilege of booking preachers from around the country, but 80% find it very difficult to communicate a message that speaks to youngsters between 13 and 18. Much more needs to be done at theological colleges and maybe we should send them for a term to a Methodist or Pentecostal College to pick up a few tips. I always say to the visiting preacher that they need to be themselves and that they should not speak for too long, but little do they listen. I find myself wondering whether to creep into the pulpit on all fours and tug at the preacher's surplice and say "please stop, as we are near death – and we will miss lunch!"

We are dealing with an awesome God who works in all our lives and a fitting sense of awe before God is to be found in the Prayer Book. That sense of awe is one of the things most notably lacking in contemporary Christianity, from the occasional banalities of the Common Worship liturgy and the more frequent inanities uttered in sermons.

I love using the Prayer Book and you can easily incorporate extempore prayer, drama, modern music, choruses and even *Archiepiscopal endorsement*.



an overhead projector. All this can be done with imagination and prayer without descending to the realms of entertainment that some churches feel necessary to keep their youth and congregations, driving clergy to the internet for new ideas and funny stories.

A lot of people, including some contemporary theologians, say that younger people find the *BCP* very hard to get into. This may be true at first, but if it is taught properly and with love, feeling, a sense of belonging and meaning, it does not take long to comprehend or to discover that manifold is not confined to a car!

On the other hand, we must be sure that we do not cling to the Prayer Book for the wrong reasons. If all we seek is the language, we could use other liturgies with the same Elizabethan vocabulary. Nor should we allow ourselves to be misrepresented as old fashioned, fuddy-duddy conservatives clinging to a Prayer Book just for the sake of it in the hope of avoiding change. The Christian faith is not conservative, it's radical, as are many young people, and as is the *BCP*. There is so much in this little red book that can nurture the young in the 21st century, not least the fact that almost every word in our Prayer Book comes from scripture.

There is another very good reason for treasuring the *BCP* with young people. It is a big part of my ministry to make them love and cherish the Church of England and to prepare them to join a parish when they leave school and enter university. I would be very sad if any pupil left King's with no knowledge of what it means to be an Anglican or for them to meet people who say "Fancy you being an Anglican! I used to be an Anglican too, before I became a Christian." I would also be very upset if a former pupil told me that they had left the Church of England because it seems to stand for so little. The belief of the Anglican Church can be found in the Prayer Book.

The *Book of Common Prayer* is our guide to worship and devotion, used in our daily relationship with God. It can be complicated and it can seem bewildering, but, working in a school with young people, I have found that once they become familiar with the pages of this treasure house, they come to love the book and its liturgy. It may have been compiled in 1552 and revised in 1662, but if it is used properly today, it can become a modern liturgy.

The *Book of Common Prayer* is a collection of ancient and beautifully inspired prayers and services for times when the community gathers and for individual use as well. It allows everyone to participate, reminding us that each person is an important part of worship, whether the service is a celebration or a solemn occasion. It is a guide book for daily Christian living. It can be a rock for young people who live in a very uncertain world, beset by media frenzy.

The *Book of Common Prayer* should be an affirmation of our faith and I can see in it many more strengths than weaknesses, many more opportunities than threats.

Fr Fredrik Arvidsson is the senior chaplain at The King's School, Canterbury.

How the boy jest became the Beau Sabreur

Teaching sport in schools: not just chasing gongs and glory, argues Bernard Trafford

Let's get one thing straight. I like sport. I'm no good at it, and a decade or three of failure put me off it. But now I love it. One of the joys of being a Head – too often interrupted by other things – is watching school sport. As a dad I have always loved watching my fanatical hockey-playing daughters.

Given my atrocious hand-eye coordination, it's always been a mystery how I could ever learn to play the organ and synchronise hands and feet in Bach preludes and fugues, despite combining a natural clumsiness with size 12 shoes.

I guess this article is going to be critical of school sport, or at least its effect on me (so, dealing with a period between 40 and 50 years ago, it can be largely discounted as ancient history). I must also confess that, for most of my school years, I was keener on avoiding sport than playing it. Even now, maintaining my astonishing physique by running three times a week, I derive little pleasure from it. It's just that if I didn't run I'd have to sort out the eating and drinking thing.

Prep school sport first taught me about sporting failure. New to rugby with all my peers, I was picked for my year-group's first U10 match. I had to ask the teacher what the term 'flanker' meant: I had only picked up 'wing-forward'. Nor was I aware that my job was to whip round the scrum and nobble the opposing scrum-half. I'm not convinced anyone had told me.

Indeed, my recollection of school sport is that people rarely explained anything. You either grasped it instinctively, were picked for the team, intensively coached and became some kind of hero in the eyes of the school and its pupils; or you missed the point and were quickly dropped from the team (as I was after the second fixture at the age of nine) and never played competitively again. You were an outsider, excluded from the marvellous world of those who could do sport with apparent ease.

Just as children who have difficulty with reading or maths learn to duck and dive and hide their inadequacies, so the kids who are swiftly labelled as being no good at sport learn avoidance strategies. During the remainder of my years of compulsory rugby I was generally screamed at for not trying (I probably wasn't) and, when teachers were really exasperated, they would make me run round the pitch while proper players learned to improve their scrum technique.

It was only at the age of 14, at senior boarding school, that I finally got a choice as to the sport I played: I took up fencing, for two reasons. First, my elder brother had done it and enjoyed it (I think he was quite good). Second, the sport is done indoors, out of the rain and in relative warmth.



'I was particularly keen on the cricket teas.'

The latter strategy wasn't entirely successful. It was decided that fencers should get fitter, so I may have endured almost as many wet, drizzly cross-country runs as other people. I became a sabreur and even represented the school once or twice (my only representative honours), but I was quite small and a bit chubby by then, and seldom troubled serious opponents. Still, full marks to the fencing coaches who taught the technique from scratch, never let me get through a session without someone checking my progress and, well, coaching.

Memory plays tricks, of course. Is it really true that no one ever told me how to do anything in any of those ball games? Or even how to hit a ball with any kind of bat or racket? I think it is. I remember prep school cricket for two things. First of all, those of us who had shown no natural aptitude occasionally got to bat at the end of a long afternoon of fielding. The best bowlers would come on and we would face a few balls. The first would leave a thigh hurting. The second a thumb or hand. The third would generally remove a stump.

I still remember the confidence-building conversation: "Trafford, you're useless at cricket but good at maths. You can be scorer." I even scored for practices, so I'm not convinced I ever held a cricket bat from the age of ten. In fairness, my mother reminds me that I was particularly keen on the cricket teas: I probably set records in demolishing those.

As a pupil of sport, then, I was neither apt nor keen. But the hierarchy of sports was another turn-off. I could fence for the school, enthusiastically if not well, but that never had the esteem accorded to rugby teams. And, of course, all the senior prefects in a school in those days were rugby-players. Exclusively.

Looking out

I was 40 when I finally learned to do a rugby drop-kick. In the park with a rugby-playing friend's young sons, he taught me to do the drop-kick. It had never occurred to anyone in school to teach me a basic skill that, for whatever reason, had never come naturally to me. As for the tactics of the great winter game, everything I know was learnt from watching televised internationals with the same friend.

It's always assumed that one naturally understands these things. Twenty years ago I was a very young Head, and had to beg my sports teachers to explain both the strategy and what was happening in an individual game. It simply didn't occur to them that I might not work it out intuitively.

The other day I was talking about school sport with a group of sixth formers. One, as it happens an international fencer, has decided to branch out into pentathlon. Leaving aside the fact that he hasn't yet got a horse, he is relishing the challenge of broader sporting activity. In many ways he's in tune with the Zeitgeist: we seem to be seeing increasing numbers of school athletes training for biathlons, triathlons and other multiple sports.

This is wonderful. I admire above all such sports-people as heptathlete Jessica Ennis. These phenomenal all-rounders truly model the old Olympic ideal: they're not mean human machines honed and crafted for one activity, but true athletes capable of excelling in several disciplines. So I was pleased to hear about my student's decision to diversify, and struck by his passion for it.

He thinks schools should be more active in encouraging that approach. By contrast, he feels that schools in general are over-eager to specialise. To be sure, most of us are proud that higher up the school we offer a wide range of sports: but 11 year-old boys are invariably required to play rugby for a whole term, or perhaps for the whole winter (a football school may go the other way). Round and oval ball rivalries aside, generations of sports teachers have always said that boys (this may be a gender thing)

must concentrate on the one sport and develop the skills early on.

This discussion made me question all this. The skill for life is not how to scrummage or kick penalties, let alone drop goals – but to take control of one's health and fitness and ensure a balanced, well-exercised, healthy lifestyle that is truly life-long.

Do we teach that in games lessons? Not much, I suspect. I am sure we deal with it in PSHE, but sport in schools is still frequently focussed on developing high-achieving teams in the sports of choice, for girls as for boys. Reasonably enlightened schools make sure that they run plenty of teams, so even a D-team rugby player gets a match now and then. But is that really the purpose?

My experience as a Head has been of working with committed, passionate sports teachers who generally succeed in maintaining a sense of balance and have the best interests of their pupils at heart. They balance that commitment to the sports they love with an understanding that they are only part of children's lives.

So I like to think that my successor, the little chubby boy who even by the age of 11 has received the message that he's no good at sport (as I had by the late 1960s), gets a better deal. Girls too! I'd hope that sports teachers out there are finding things that they can do, modest ways in which they can achieve (I don't mean refereeing for ten minutes!), and finding the joy of participation and teamwork as well as of setting themselves real but realistic challenges, and learning from tackling them.

Nonetheless, when I read about some of the fanatical focus on single sports in schools and in the wider world, not to mention in professional sport, I wonder if we still risk losing both the educational and the Olympic ideal, chasing gongs and glory instead of real personal fulfilment.

I don't have any neat answers. But I hope that in schools we are at least starting to ask ourselves the right questions.

Bernard Trafford has now graduated to Beau Ideal – at least for some of us.

HERE & THERE



Los Angeles high jump

In 1984 Harold Tarraway, director of PE at Bryanston, was particularly impressed with the high jumping of one of his athletes, the 16 year-old Zambian Mutale Mulenga.

Harold had won the 800 metres at the World Student Games in Paris in 1947 and he sailed through the qualifiers at the London Olympics the following year. In the semi-final, however, he was brought down by one of the favourites who fell in front of him.

In addition to this Olympic experience, Harold always had an eye for the main chance and he discovered that Mutale had already set the Zambian national high jump record at Bryanston. As a developing nation, Zambia was allowed to send a number of athletes to the LA Games who had not achieved the official qualifying standard.

Getting to Los Angeles was challenging, largely because of currency problems, but Mutale eventually found his way into the Olympic stadium, where he set a new Zambian and Bryanston High Jump record of 2.05 metres, both of which still stand!

Marching to Drake's Drum

Olympic dreams beyond Plymouth Hoe

It's hard to believe that it was four years ago that I was on the edge of my seat watching the nail-biting finish of the Beijing 10k Open Water event, in which former Plymouth College pupil Cassie Patten won a bronze medal. Cassie was one of the school's first swimming scholars and, although she had left the school 12 months before to continue her studies and sport at university, I watched her battle for an Olympic medal in the middle of the night with immense pride.

Fast forward to 2012 and the school's stake in the London Olympics is much greater; four times greater in fact, as four pupils have been selected to national teams and this time they are all still at school.

Diver Tom Daley needs little introduction as the World and double Commonwealth champion. Already an Olympic veteran, the 17 year-old phenomenon has become the public face of the 2012 games and is a strong medal contender. But behind closed doors he is just a normal teenager who has to go to school and do his homework. However, he has to fit this in around an intense training programme and competition schedule that takes him all over the world and it is our job at Plymouth College to do all we can to ensure that both his sporting and academic goals are met.

Tom is not alone in this daily juggling act at Plymouth College and, although they lack his profile, life for Ruta Meilutyte, 14, Jamila Lunkuse, 15, and Jade Howard, 16, is just as challenging. All three girls are part of the school's elite swimming programme and will swim for Lithuania, Uganda and Zambia respectively in the summer games.



Simon Wormleighton.

Between them they have a heavy collection of international silverware and a string of national records. Waiting in the wings are two more hopefuls who must wait to see if they will make it to the starting blocks for Great Britain.

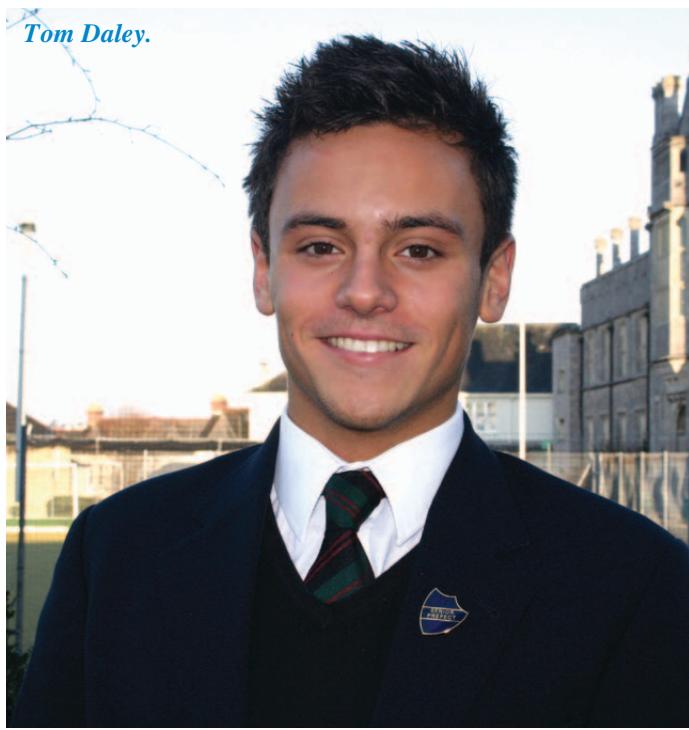
Life is very intense for these young swimmers who are in the pool by 5.30am most weekdays to train before school, fitting in another two hours in the evening as well as Saturday mornings. Ruta and Jade live locally but Jamila and the two GB prospects live in the school's specialist swimming boarding house, thought to be the only one of its kind in the country. Here we can cater for the specific welfare, dietary, academic and medical needs of the athletes.

The house has its own physio room and teaching staff visit in the evenings to bring the swimmers up-to-speed with any areas of the curriculum that may have been missed because of training or competition commitments. As a school it is important that we do all we can to support them in achieving their sporting dreams, but we also have a responsibility to



Jamila Lunkuse and Ruta Meilutyte.

Looking out



Tom Daley.



Kelcey Pillage.

make sure that they achieve the best they can academically for when their sporting careers come to an end.

Despite a strong reputation for local and regional sport, our elite athlete journey only began in 2000 when we built a competition-level 25m pool and formed a partnership with renowned local club, Plymouth Leander. As the swimming programme picked up momentum we developed a unique environment that gave talented young athletes access to the very best coaches and facilities, true flexibility in the curriculum, extensive pastoral support and specialist mentoring covering everything from goal-setting and life plans to diet and sleep.

While the school's swimming success has certainly dominated the headlines, this environment is no longer swimming specific and national and international waves are being made by top athletes – both boarders and day pupils – in other sports such as modern pentathlon, fencing and rugby.

Tom Daley is part of this 60-strong elite athlete family and, as with most of our leading sportsmen and sportswomen, he applies the same motivation to his academic studies as he does to his diving training. He knows that he has to work harder than most to stay on top of things, but in return we give him the framework to make that as easy as possible.

Throughout his time at the school, Tom has been able to set his own learning targets so that he can comfortably fit his studies around his diving commitments, mixing timetabled lessons with intensive one-to-one tuition. This allows him to get ahead of the game before, and catch up after, big competitions that sometimes keep him away from school for weeks at a time. He has also been able to tap into electronic communication with staff so that his studies can continue even when abroad.

Knowing how intense the year leading up to the Olympics would be, Tom started his A2 studies last spring, keen to get as much in the bag as he could before his diving commitments took over completely. As London 2012 gets ever closer that time has now come for Tom and we expect to see very little of

him in the coming months. But he can take a step back from his studies with no worries, knowing that he completed most of his A level modules in January and can come back and finish the rest in September.

But it doesn't all end with Tom, Ruta, Jamila and Jade in 2012. Modern Pentathlete Kelcey Pillage, 17, has represented Great Britain at U17 level at a number of international competitions and has her eyes fixed firmly on the 2014 Commonwealth Games and 2016 Olympics in Rio. Her younger brother, Myles, 14, has held national titles in swimming, biathlon and triathlon and will most definitely start making his mark on the international stage very soon.

Then there are fencers Tia Simms-Lynn, 12, and Tim Andrews, 14, who hold a string of national titles between them and have represented England in overseas events in categories two years older than their actual age. And so the list goes on with other swimmers, divers, modern pentathletes, fencers, rugby players and even an U21 British clay pigeon shooting champion!

With our elite athletes dominating the news, it is easy to forget that they form less than 12% of our school community and that the environment in which they thrive translates itself to all parts of the school. Our ethos is to embrace individual talents, whatever they may be, and to encourage success and instil confidence across a broad front, whether it's business students winning their 11th national competition and selling an eco bird feeder to Vince Cable, or a Year 7 pupil standing up in front of the whole school for the first time and delivering a line in the house drama competition.

For now, though, London 2012 is very much at the forefront and I for one will be avidly watching the diving and swimming events, taking pride in the knowledge that Plymouth College has played a massive part in helping these young athletes to achieve their dreams.

Dr Simon Wormleighton has been Headmaster of Plymouth College since 2006.

The unknown tomb of the literary warrior

Roger V Mobs discovers a distinguished Old Boy

"Why is that bus parked outside Chapel, Laura?"

"Americans, sir," replied the prefect. "It's the great man's 200th birthday this year."

"Great man?"

"They've come to see the tomb of Charles Dickens."

"But he's buried in Westminster Abbey."

"Such technicalities hold little dread for form four sir. Some judicious internet advertising, a few double-page spreads in American retirement magazines and *kerching!* They're getting two coachloads a day at £5 per person. It's serious wonga, sir."

A water cannon opened fire from my forehead. I started running to the chapel, calling back to Laura: "And just what do form four think will happen when this waddling mass of gullibility actually goes to Westminster Abbey and sees the real thing? What then?"

"They've thought of that, sir. They said it would be your problem."

"My name is Ebenezer Cratchit," squeaked a feeble, consumptive voice from the centre of the nave: "cripple, guide and direct descendant of Tiny Tim."

I knew the speaker better as Terry Davies from 4L, but there were 60 awestruck Americans between myself and the little fraud who was directing the throng's gaze to our Founder's marble memorial. I could not risk a scene in front of so many.

"Soon I will show you the buildings that inflamed moral outrage in our hero. But first... Behold." Davies slowly raised a shaking hand and dropped his voice to a whisper: "The tomb of Charles Dickens."

After a few seconds of silent amazement, the reverence was disturbed by a Kentuckian's twang: "Sir, I know Dickens had a love of the theatre but why..."

"Is he buried in full medieval armour?" cut in Davies. "You ask what many ask, and I can only say what your own Cherokee Indians famously declared when exasperated: *svgi inageehi giniyaluga*. It means *Let's go hunt for some wild onions*."

The Americans seemed strangely satisfied and we shuffled out of the chapel towards the school vegetable gardens. An east coast drawl came from the middle of the throng:

"Master Cratchit, sir, I was under the impression Dickens's characters were fictitious and yet you say you are a descendant of Tiny Tim. Is it widely known these people really existed?"

"Does this crutch not tell its own tale?" intoned Davies solemnly. "And does this sight not confirm the awful truth?"

With these words, Davies led the group round the corner into the school allotments. The scene awaiting us put me in mind of the leper colony in *Ben Hur*. Each of the four potting

sheds was packed with fourth formers, huddled together in rags, rocking back and forth as they wept.

"My God!" exhaled a lady in immense shorts. "What kind of school is this anyway? Who are these kids?"

"These, madam, are the children they'd rather you didn't see." Davies' voice grew magnificently. "Housed in misery, clothed in frost, and fed only by their own tears."

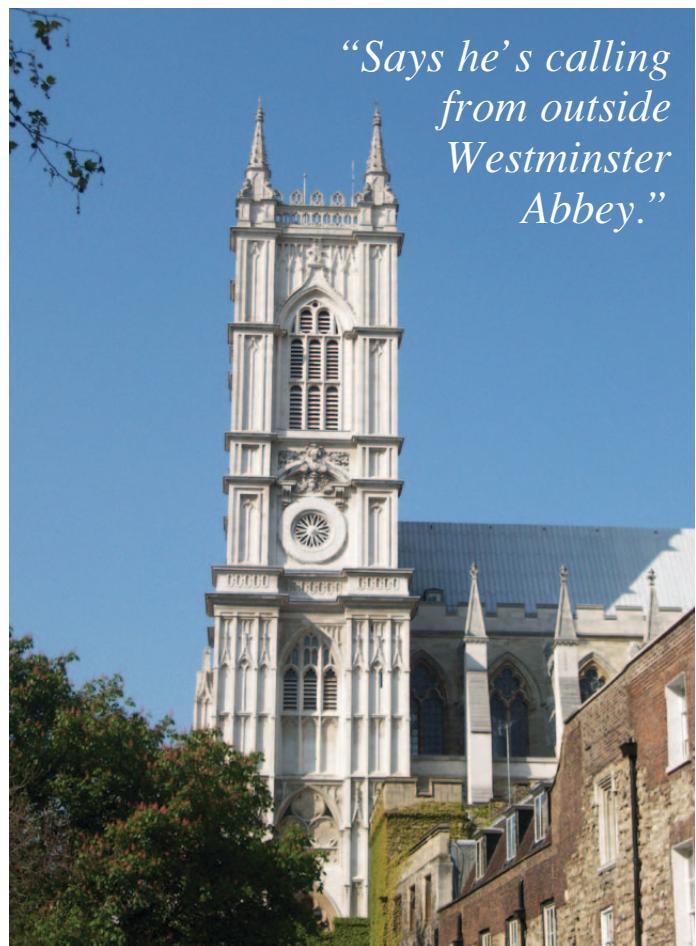
The pupils started stretching out their hands and calling out as the Americans wandered aghast through the sheds.

"Five pounds to 'elp us fix the roof, good sir. 'Elp poor Dorrit fix her roof. Dorrit's roof's a-tumblin' sir. Don't let it tumble. Not on poor Dorrit. Dorrit's done nobody no 'arm."

It wasn't long before hundreds of pounds were being doled out to the Bagstocks and Barnacles, Grimwigs and Grummidges, Wopsles and Wigsbys. I walked at the back of the group scowling and making threatening gestures at the beggars.

"Hello, sir," whispered Molly Hopkins once the rest of the party had passed her. "I see you're not quite getting in the spirit of things." →

*"Says he's calling
from outside
Westminster
Abbey."*



Looking out

"Because it's criminal, that's why. You can't treat Americans like this."

"Given they've got to buy a marquee every time they need a T-shirt, I think they can spare a little for the huddled masses. Anyway, must stop ... they're coming back. Pennies for Sweeney. Pennies for Sweeney."

The ringleaders stood in my office. Terry Davies was finishing his explanation. "And so I said to them just let the affectation become the character and – hey presto – they were all in role within seconds."

"But they weren't in role," I protested. "You just pinched random names from Dickens and turned everyone into Eliza Doolittle."

"Well that's a bit rich, sir, if I may say so. There's Dickens making a present to us of static characters who burst fully formed into every novel, and you want a bunch of 14 year-olds

to invest them with emotional development and psychological realism. If you require that level of performance we'll have to wait for the George Eliot anniversary."

I rolled my pen in my hands. "How ... er ... how much did you make?"

"Income £1200, sir. Proposed donation to Headmaster's special fund £600, sir. Result happiness."

"Sounds reasonable."

My PA appeared.

"Phone call, Headmaster."

"Not now, Maureen. I'm in negotiations with the fourth form."

"I think you should take it, Headmaster. Sounds urgent. American chap. Says he's calling from outside Westminster Abbey..."

Roger V Mobs holds an MBA from the Micawber Institute of Finance, Port Middlebay, NSW.

The resident Resident

Benji Sperring challenges the world of professional theatre

Educational artistic residencies in independent schools are the new big step in promoting young directors, actors, choreographers and producers. Whilst this position is in its infancy, is there a way such posts can become more effective for everyone involved?

The position of Director in Residence [DiR] is one that I have had the pleasure of occupying at three separate schools: Eton College, Dulwich College Preparatory School and The Portsmouth Grammar School. I have found I am rather addicted to them now. On the surface, they provide everything a young practitioner could wish for: artistic licence, respect amongst peers, an opportunity to experiment and explore, and, usually, a large show at the end to showcase the director's talent and skill.

However, after leaving my previous two residencies and struggling to find any work, I have begun to question whether the position of DiR could function in a more effective way to benefit the schools, the local theatres and the resident director.

The conversations I have had with working professionals on their view of the DiR position have been disconcerting. One particular theatre in London – a focus of young directors – point-blank refuses to see any work created as part of a DiR programme and will not recognise the work in professional terms.

It is to do with the preconception that the show simply won't cut the mustard. Lamentably, this is an understandable view, based on stereotypes which presumably stem from the 'old' style of school theatre which current practitioners experienced. However, this assumption has not been updated since the arrival of the DiR position: these pieces of theatre are a private school's main advertising, the public face of a multi-million pound business.

The show *can't* be bad: parents, both current and prospective, need to see that their children are receiving the best opportunities artistically and intellectually. The schools use the performances to impress the community and beneficiaries. Although it is an opportunity for the whole school community to come together and support a piece of work, it is much more than this: the reputation of the establishment relies on the success of a piece.

The reality of the situation is that artistic residencies in schools have now become an enormous opportunity for young directors – usually with some experience of the fringe or professional stage – to stretch their wings with large budgets, fully tech'd venues, collaborating with industry professionals, directing a cast of talented and versatile young actors, and eventually culminating in a showcase with high production values and full artistic freedom.

If a theatre offered this level of support the final showcase would be readily attended by professionals in a spirit of nurture; in three residencies, I have not managed to get a single industry professional to see a show I have directed.

So, what is to be done? I would suggest that schools and theatres have an open dialogue. The educational establishment is an inherently untheatrical setting for training new directors, where a director is given an opportunity but receives no practical feedback, so guidance from a local theatre as to the best way to nurture a young director is paramount.

The director at the school is able to work with local theatres, via workshops and outreach projects, for free. The school can receive input from the theatres when hiring – perhaps by looking through CVs – to make sure the candidate ticks both artistic as



'The public face of a multi-million pound business.'

well as academic boxes. The students benefit from any skills the director learns with the theatre. The theatre then comes to see the director's show and offers feedback at the end.

The cost to a theatre? Nil. The school pays the bills and the theatre and school reaps the rewards of a fresh new director working with them. The opportunities created? The children benefit from the best directors, the school strengthens its bond with local theatres and the young directors have an opportunity to showcase their work to a larger audience.

Regardless of this programme, it is in both the school and the DiR's best interests for the school, as a matter of course, to invite theatres to see how their directorship is helping young people in the arts and giving artistic expression to up-and-coming directors. It may well be that the reason theatres and artistic professionals do not recognise the DiR position is through the lack of input they have over the role.

As I leave my third residency, at The Portsmouth Grammar School, I look back on my time at all the schools I have worked with. Since finishing my training at The Central School of Speech and Drama at the age of 22, I have

been employed and drawn a respectable salary for the industry;

directed in regional theatres with casts of over 50 actors; worked with and managed budgets appropriate to a three week London run;

directed 12 full-scale shows (six of those taking place during one year);

worked in a rep-like theatre with a constant rehearse/perform structure;

managed a creative team;

directed site-specific work at a well-known venue;

explored and experimented with different styles of theatre (in the round, end-on, thrust, environmental);

directed my own writing;

learnt how to engage, encourage and enhance actors of all standards and backgrounds.

The breadth and diversity of opportunities would not be available to me as a young director for many years were it not for the residencies that I have occupied. It is frustrating, therefore, that this experience is not recognised by professional theatre.

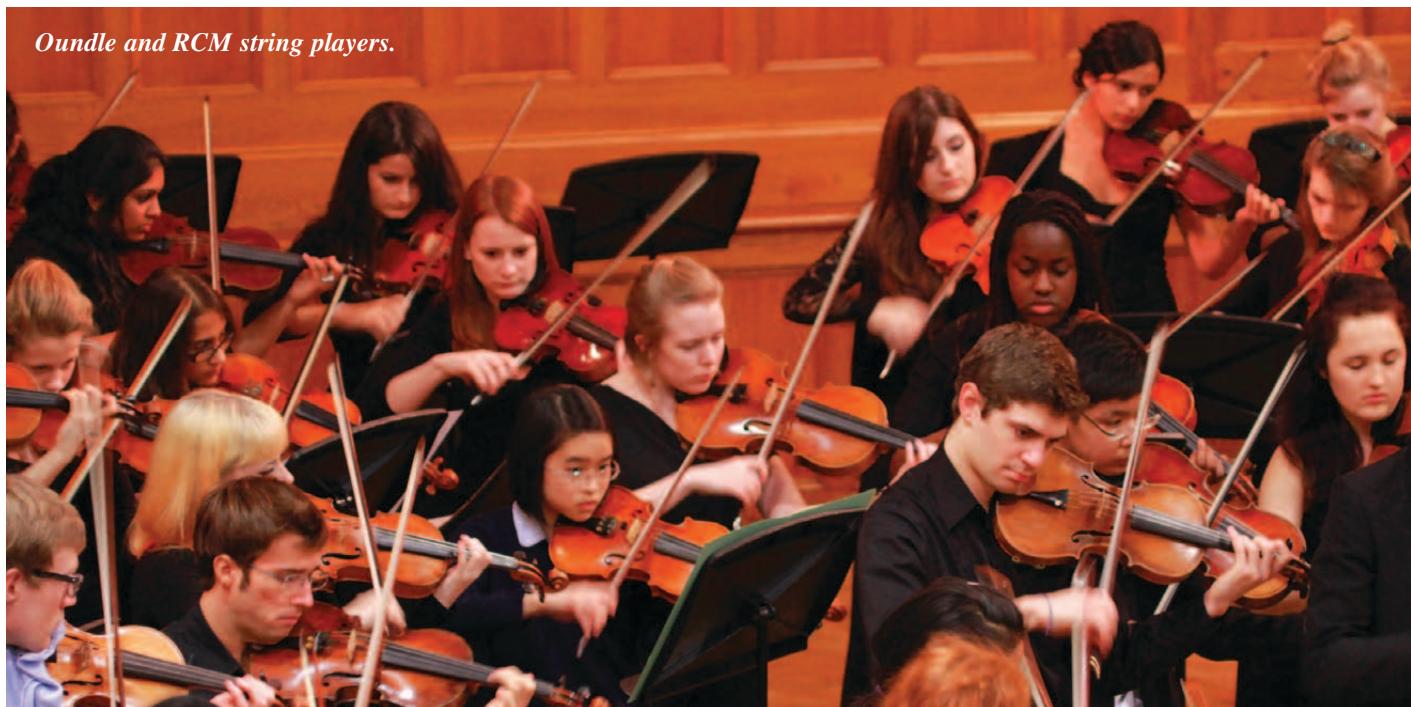
With the recent emergence of many new directors – spurred on by the boom in drama and theatre studies degree courses across the country – the DiR position is becoming more and more important to the young director. Now is a time to revolutionise the position and start a conversation that will extend industry-wide in regards to educational residencies. All it needs to start with is an email.

Benji Sperring is a theatre director and playwright.

Oundle School and the Royal College of Music

A unique partnership

Oundle and RCM string players.



Oundle School has entered into a partnership arrangement with the Royal College of Music whereby pupils from the School may gain experience of working with professors and students from the College, both in Oundle and London. The prime movers behind this are Mark Messenger, head of strings at the Royal College of Music, and Angus Gibbon, head of strings at Oundle School.

The memorandum of understanding between the two institutions was signed on Friday, 13th January, 2012, by Headmaster Charles Bush and Stephen Johns, artistic director of the Royal College of Music, and followed by a concert by all three areas of the educational spectrum: primary, secondary and tertiary.

Laxton Junior School string project showed the beginnings of string playing. Pupils from Oundle School and students from the Royal College demonstrated the progression from secondary to tertiary level. Students from the RCM and pupils from both schools played together in performances of Grieg's *Holberg Suite* and Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*. Students from the Royal College then astounded the capacity audience with James McMillan's *Second Piano Concerto* and Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* to finish the concert.

Mark Potter, Head of Laxton Junior School, was delighted at this opportunity for younger musicians. "Form two of Laxton Junior School were thrilled to have been asked to play in the recent string concert. This was only the second time that our musicians had played before an audience. It was wonderful to see the development of playing stringed instruments at LJS and Oundle School and it highlighted to our musicians just what they could achieve with lots of practice, dedication and enjoyment. Playing alongside the Oundle School Junior and Intermediate

Strings, the Oundle School Chamber Orchestra and the Royal College of Music strings was an evening to remember for our six and seven year olds," he said

This was not the first concert that Oundle and the RCM have given together, and the hope is that collaborations can continue in the future, involving the keyboard, brass and woodwind faculties. The School hopes to hold a joint symposium with the RCM in spring 2013, and there is interest at the RCM in Oundle's 'Violinist in Balance' project, which has been developed by the School's Alexander Technique team in conjunction with Utrecht Conservatoire.

Andrew Forbes, the director of music, looks ahead to great things. "As a School we are honoured to have our name linked with the Royal College of Music. We have now worked with the Royal College on three separate occasions and are delighted to have made this formal link. We are very excited about the prospect of closer liaison in the future."

Mark Messenger is equally enthusiastic. "It is exciting to find a school which shares the same values and aspirations for their students as we do at the Royal College of Music. What was demonstrated in our concert together was commitment, energy, enthusiasm, discipline and enjoyment. I look forward to making music together in the future."

Oundle School works closely with the Oundle International Festival, Oundle for Organists and distinguished musicians such as Jeremy Menuhin, Natalie Clein, Michael Bocman and Craig Ogden. Pupils have taken part in joint projects with the English String Orchestra, the Aurora Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Swan, and the Endellion String Quartet are currently musicians in residence.

Is this the DVD that launched a thousand thoughts?

Stephen Burley reviews Stage on Screen's *Dr Faustus*

A good play needs to be seen and heard, to be witnessed in the flesh rather than read from the page. In fact, as many experienced teachers will know, there is no better way to murder a good play than to spend hours sweating over the intricacies of Elizabethan drama with students in the classroom. For a richer, more authentic appreciation of a play we must see it brought alive in performance, to measure the scene in our mind's eye against that produced by a company of professional actors on stage.

Schools and colleges, however, are finding it increasingly difficult to offer access to live theatre: for one, the costs can be prohibitive; secondly, it's not always easy to find a good production that coincides with the schedule of teaching; and, as we know, the logistics of such a trip are sometimes enough to raise a question mark in even the most enthusiastic English or drama teacher.

It is with this in mind that Stage on Screen was launched in 2009 with the aim of producing high-quality DVDs of

classic plays professionally staged at London's Greenwich Theatre. The plays are filmed in front of a live audience and are recorded with multiple cameras in high definition and surround sound. The result is deeply impressive. This production of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* crackles with intensity as the thrill and excitement of live theatre is captured on DVD to be savoured at home or in classroom.

Thus far Stage on Screen has focused on non-Shakespearean classics (*Doctor Faustus*, *The School for Scandal*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *Volpone*), plays that ought to be studied and taught more frequently, but which are all too often overlooked in preference for the Bard.

Doctor Faustus, in particular, offers a fascinating insight into the shadowy underworld of Elizabethan society. Like his most famous protagonist Dr John Faustus, Marlowe's life and death was enveloped by mystery and scandal. A scholar at The King's School, Canterbury, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, he appears to have worked, after graduating, as one of Sir Francis Walsingham's spies, moving in Catholic circles in northern France in the 1580s.

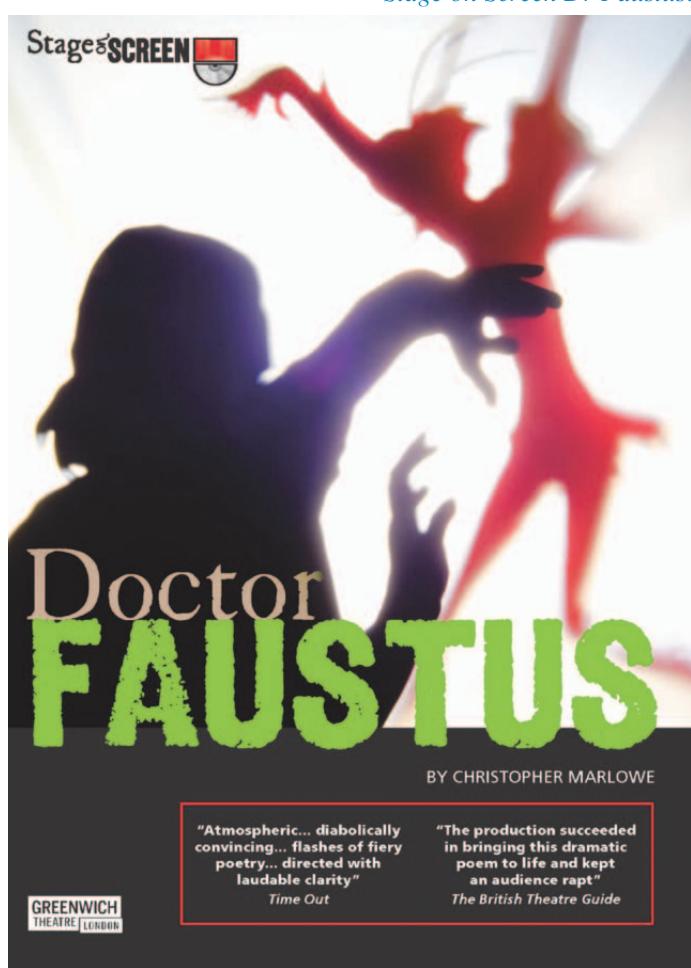
After this stint as government agent, he launched his career as a playwright in the summer of 1587 with *Tamberlaine the Great*, a thunderous drama of conquest and ambition. He had, however, a penchant for trouble and in 1589 he was imprisoned in Newgate on suspicion of the murder of William Bradley, a shady Londoner with a history of violence.

In 1592 he had two further brushes with the law: in May he was involved in an altercation with a constable and beadle in Shoreditch and was bound over to 'keep the peace'. He was, however, unable to attend the court case in October because he had been detained in Canterbury after a street fight with a tailor named William Corkine.

The manner of his death in 1593 more than matched his wild and rebellious life. Mired in allegations of heresy and atheism as a result of the evidence of an intelligence agent, Richard Baines, Marlowe received a fatal wound during a fight with Ingram Frizer, a servant of Thomas Walsingham (and relation of the spymaster Francis Walsingham). He died in the house of Eleanor Bull, a member of the ancient Whitney family of Herefordshire, in Deptford Strand.

Famously, he and Frizer had argued over the cost of a bill for supper. It seems apt, then, that the latest revival of his *Doctor Faustus*, a play that chronicles the wild life and death of its protagonist, should be staged in such close proximity to the place of Marlowe's tragic death at Greenwich.

As Frank Romany has noted, the play is 'a spectacle of damnation', a tragic moral and spiritual narrative that chronicles the fall of Faustus, the celebrated scholar of Wittenberg who pledges his soul to the devil in exchange for 24 years of unabated hedonism. Gareth Kennerley is a young,



Reviews

intense, highly-wrought Faustus, bringing an unusual energy to this most challenging of lead roles. He begins the play by carefully constructing a delicate façade of swagger, bravado and insouciance, beneath which we sense Faustus's spiritual and psychological agony as his tormented soul endures the timeless struggle between good and evil.

This Manichean battle is represented on stage by the presence of Good and Evil Angels who persuade, tempt, cajole and implore the troubled protagonist. Joanna Christie, cast both as Helen of Troy and the Evil Angel, adds a sexual frisson to the drama as Faustus finally succumbs to temptation, cutting his arm to sign in his own blood the devilish pact with Lucifer.

It is, however, the relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles (a dark precursor to that between Prospero and Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*) that forms the dramatic core of the play. There is an intuitive understanding between Kennerley and Tim Treloar, who is a charismatic and darkly menacing Mephistopheles, capturing both the latent comedy and the tragedy at the heart of this complex character. Acutely sensitive to Marlowe's dark humour, there is a knowing glint in his eye as he carefully and cleverly leads Faustus to his eternal damnation.

The high moral and religious drama of the central narrative arc of the play is off-set, however, by a comedic sub-plot involving the hair-brained antics of Robin and Wagner. Historically, this has been the least popular, and certainly the most problematic aspect of Marlowe's play, as the slapstick comedy, for some audiences, sits uneasily alongside the high-toned utterances of the tragic protagonist.

The scenes, however, were central to the post-Reformation

context of Marlowe's source material, and they serve a crucial parodic function within the play. This production offers a thoughtful and intelligent rendering of these difficult scenes as the director (Elizabeth Freestone) uses them not only for light comic relief, but also to cast important light upon Faustus's tragic myopia. Adam Redmore is particularly impressive as Robin, an Elizabethan fool whose thick Welsh accent and brilliant comic timing finds an apt parallel in Rhys Ifans's Spike in the film *Notting Hill*.

Swinburne aptly noted of *Doctor Faustus* that 'Few masterpieces of any age in any language can stand beside this tragic poem [...] for the qualities of terror and splendour, for intensity of purpose and sublimity of note.' After watching this production, I would have to agree; I would certainly highly recommend it to students, teachers and librarians.

Stage on Screen have succeeded admirably in producing an important new educational resource that not only captures excellent live theatre on DVD and makes it widely accessible at an affordable price, but also offers a range of additional material (interviews with the cast and production team, downloadable study aids, photographic gallery, interactive CD-ROM and much more) to deepen and extend understanding of the play as a text in performance.

The *Doctor Faustus* DVD is both technically sophisticated and educationally thoughtful. Although, as no doubt the purists will emphasise, nothing can replace the raw excitement of live theatre experienced at first hand, Stage on Screen offers an intelligent and timely alternative.

Dr Stephen Burley is head of English at Sevenoaks School.

South Downs

A new play by David Hare

Schools have produced some fine material for theatre and film, from *The History Boys* to *If....* As the Headmaster of three schools spanning 20 years, I never quite managed to dispel my memory of the final scene in *If....* when Peter Jeffery playing the liberal, modernising Headmaster ("Boys, boys, I understand you") is pitilessly gunned down by the rebellious boys led by Malcolm McDowell.

Arguably, the finest play/film set in a school remains Terence Rattigan's *The Browning Version*. Last autumn, the Chichester Festival Theatre celebrated the Rattigan centenary with a new production of the play, ably directed by Angus Jackson. Instead of its usual companion piece, *Harlequinade*, the Rattigan Estate, in a moment of inspiration, commissioned David Hare to write a new play, suitable to be produced alongside *The Browning Version*. The outcome was *South Downs*.

South Downs is set in a public school on the South Downs in 1962 and centres on John Blakemore, a solitary, precocious 14 year old boy, struggling to understand and adapt to his new school. He is popular with neither boys nor staff. One teacher complains that there is "a very fine line between precocity and insolence and you've just crossed it".

Now his only friend is on the point of abandoning him. What

makes *South Downs* such a fine play is its moving and entirely convincing portrayal of teenage angst in a rapidly changing world. Alex Lawther (aged 16) plays Blakemore and leads the teenage cast with astonishing skill, thanks to the direction of Jeremy Herrin.

Just as *The Browning Version* depicts the cruel world of adults with Andrew Crocker-Harris, the emotionally repressed classics teacher, humiliated by both his wife and Headmaster, so *South Downs* portrays the sometimes casual, sometimes deliberate cruelty of adolescents. Yet in each play, it is an act of kindness which precipitates hope that a better future lies ahead for Crocker-Harris and Blakemore.

In the case of Crocker-Harris, it is the gift of a book (Browning's translation of the Agamemnon) by a grateful pupil that acts as the catalyst for a chain of events which may enable him to regain his self-respect and escape from a loveless marriage. For Blakemore, his salvation is provided by the kindness of a sixth former and his actress mother.

Which HMC school is represented in *South Downs*? As David Hare attended Lancing College from 1960 to 1964, the identity of the school is no great secret, particularly when a central scene in the play revolves around a debate as to whether the act of Holy Communion should be experienced as an act of transubstantiation or consubstantiation in a High Church, Anglo-Catholic school.

With the benefit of hindsight it was an extraordinary era in the history of Lancing College. During those few short years the school was nurturing three of the most distinguished theatrical talents of the past 50 years – Christopher Hampton



*David Hare
at Lancing.*

(Oscar winner - *The Lion King*, *Joseph, Evita*, *Chess*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*) and Sir David Hare (Oscar nominee - *The Hours*, *Plenty*, *Pravda*, *Racing Demon*, *Skylight*, *Stuff Happens* – and recently named as one of the 50 most influential people of the past 50 years in the *Sunday Times Colour Magazine*). I, too, attended Lancing College during this period and to this day find it a most unlikely and extraordinary coincidence that my three closest school friends both then and now turned out to be such giants of the theatre.

I can only venture one explanation for their success and my talentless but genuine love for theatre and film. Lancing provided us with a *serious* education in which books, films, music, plays, politics were discussed with real passion and interest. There cannot have been many schools in the early 1960s where boys could be persuaded to attend, both voluntarily and enthusiastically, a European Film Society where the latest films of Ingmar Bergman, Francois Truffaut and Michelangelo Antonioni were shown.

Not every teacher was great, but there were enough really good teachers to provide a nucleus for a proper, rounded, education. Presiding over the school was a liberal and enlightened Headmaster – John Dancy (no relation) – who almost single-handedly dragged Lancing into the twentieth century, a feat he was to repeat at Marlborough, before being lost to the world of Higher Education.

The cast of South Downs and The Browning Version at Lancing.

Both *South Downs* and *The Browning Version* received a rapturous critical reception at Chichester and the good news is that they open with the same cast in the West End at the Harold Pinter Theatre on Thursday, 19th April, until Saturday, 28th July, 2012. If any schools want tickets, the education group rate is for 10+ best available seats £19.50, plus one teacher free for every ten tickets purchased. This offer applies (subject to availability) Monday–Thursday 7.30pm and Thursday 2.30pm. Email education@encoretickets.co.uk or telephone 020 7492 1525.

David Hare has always acknowledged his debt to Lancing for the quality of education it provided. *South Downs* is probably his most personal, warm and compassionate play. That it is also witty and entertaining goes without saying for those familiar with his work. I urge you to see it: a memorable evening is guaranteed.

Already his plays are percolating into schools. I have recently seen fine productions of *Racing Demon* at Shrewsbury and *Pravda* at Warwick. I strongly suspect that *South Downs* will be performed frequently in house, sixth form and whole school productions in years to come. Amateur rights will be available from the end of the West End run and the script of *South Downs* is published by Faber at £9.99.

Roger Dancey was Headmaster of King Edward VIth Camp Hill School for Boys, Chief Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham and Headmaster of City of London School. He is now chairman of governors at Warwick School.



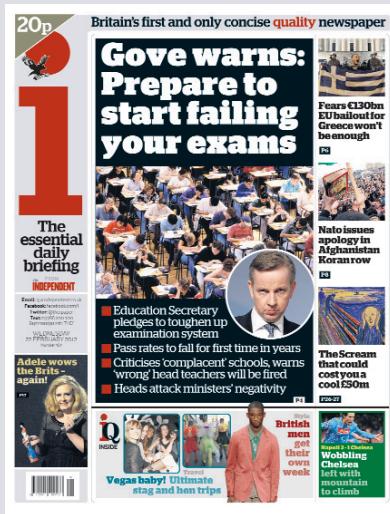
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Our Century

Eltham College at Mottingham 1912 to 2012 A pictorial history by Mark Stickings

A first-time visitor to this high-achieving London day school would not jump to the conclusion that it had originally been a missionary foundation, especially since the closure of its boarding house in 2005.

In Victorian times, with missionaries serving throughout the world, it became incumbent on missionary societies to supply not only reliable schooling, but also a home for the children left behind in the mother country. Thus the School for the Sons of Missionaries was established in Walthamstow in 1842.

Mark Stickings covers the 70 years before its move from Blackheath in 1912 in two succinct, very readable, pages. Illustrating productively from his archives, he is able to provide a fascinating insight into the steps that led the school to take over the Royal Naval College's site in Mottingham, with its much greater potential. It was at this time that the school became known as Eltham College.

A pictorial presentation captures readers of all ages, enticing them at a glance and providing an immediate impression of time's progress and the developments that went with it. It is a most accessible invitation to the events and personalities that decorated the story. Furthermore, this volume is blessed by a commentary rich in knowledge, anecdote and wit. Stickings's pervasive humour colours and informs the narrative. As a reflection of life in a Victorian boarding foundation this succinct volume makes a useful contribution to the history of English education.

When seeking anecdotes, the author benefits considerably from the fact that the legendary cricketer W G Grace lived nearby and visited the school quite frequently. Grace's death in 1915 was caused, we are told, by a heart attack from furiously shaking his fist at a Zeppelin overhead. And here is a memo from Headmaster Porteous: 'This benighted boy waiting for admission to a history room this morning left his disgusting chewing gum affixed to the newly decorated wall of Central Hall. He can probably be traced. He ought to be sharply punished.'

However, there are drawbacks to this structure: the cursory nature of the narrative, skimming the surface of personalities and events, restricts the opportunity to delve. It undoubtedly whets the reader's appetite, but can leave him frustrated for development.

The wars serve as focal points. World War One broke soon after the school settled in Mottingham. At no other time in the school's history has there been a CCF, but young members of the school are pictured drilling under the stern eye and

lavish moustache of the redoubtable Mr John. There was also activity in nearby Grove Park Barracks, and a youngster wrote home: 'Harmon, Cochrane and I went to see the London buses being prepared for the front. Harmon began painting the buses and Cochrane lit the soldiers' cigarettes.'

Subsequent generations may not have judged CCF to be a suitable activity for a missionary foundation, but the Scouts certainly were, and between the wars their popularity burgeoned. The Scout Hut too became an asset for boarders as 'a den of our own, for table tennis, cooking, badge work and sing-songs'.

Come World War Two, the boarders were transferred from the danger zone of bombing to the comparative security of Taunton School in Somerset. For many of those, of course, their principal memories reflect Eltham House at Taunton. Meanwhile, with the 230 or so day boys in south-east London, we read that the precursor to a game of rugby was the scouring of the playing fields for shrapnel from the previous night's anti-aircraft shells; boys carried gas masks on the trains home; and a game of quad soccer was interrupted by a German plane flying low over the tower.

Stickings gives due (and generous) deference to the eight Headmasters of the century but, perhaps for many, greater interest is provided by his portraits of the giants of the common room – the 'lifers' as he calls them – which included some typical eccentrics. There was the legendary Sydney Moore who, as a cricket umpire, refused to allow a boundary claimed by W G Grace in a match against the school. This led to a battle of wills

Eric Liddell in the Eltham College Cricket team, 1916.



'Wallsie'.





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described by a third party as “a clash between the pillars of the world”. Then there was the disciplinarian Bill Scott, who never missed a day’s school through illness or injury in his 34 years at the College. One colleague commented of him, “As a pacifist, he could act as a most militant one”.

In view of the eminence of so many OEs, selections of individuals are bound to be contentious, but no one would argue with the names of Eric Liddell and Mervyn Peake. Eric and his elder brother, Robert, transferred as boarders from Blackheath. His exploits as an Olympic athlete were brought to universal attention through the film *Chariots of Fire*, but his service as a missionary in China and his early death in a Japanese camp have been less widely known.

Peake’s reputation as a top-ranking artist has never been higher. As a schoolboy, his stylish but idiosyncratic sense of priorities did not match those of his Headmaster. It is said he was saved from expulsion by the assurances of his gifted art teacher that he would some day be famous. Like many, he was called up in 1940 and, as a war artist, he witnessed the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

The foundation’s two seminal features – missionary children and boarding – are presented with due sensitivity, though since they were originally the school’s *raison d’être* they possibly deserve greater emphasis. From the outset these children, some as young as six and seven, were sent from the far reaches of

Christendom, travelling with little more than a tuck box. For many, home and school were one. Nevertheless, boys appear to have been mostly happy with their lot and looked forward to the visits from ‘Wallsie’, the ice-cream man.

It could be argued that, for a history, disproportionate emphasis is given to the Eltham College of today, but this is to cavil. The concluding Annexe provides pictures of every member of the 2012 school community – all manner of support staff, as well as pupils and teachers. This serves as a reminder of the range of inter-connected responsibilities on which a school depends and the author has thoughtfully provided an index to guide the reader through the more than 1200 names that occur throughout the story.

Mark Stickings has given us a colourful and embracing publication which does justice to a school that has much to celebrate, not least in this Olympic year.

Malcolm Green is a former Headmaster of Warminster School and Eltham College.

Our Century, Eltham College at Mottingham 1912 – 2012, is published by the school. It costs £20 if picked up there or £26.40 including first-class postage. Order via the school website: www.eltham-college.org.uk/ourcentury <http://www.eltham-college.org.uk/ourcentury> or by telephoning 020 8857 1455.

Ironside had attended Tonbridge in the 1890s and returned to unveil the school’s First World War memorial in 1925. (Sadly, this was destroyed by fire in 1998 but salvaged parts are now incorporated into a new memorial.) In 1938, Ironside’s son joined Tonbridge and he was a regular visitor during the Second World War.

The outbreak of war delivered three immediate challenges to Eric Whitworth, Tonbridge’s new Headmaster, when he arrived in September 1939. First, he had to ensure the pupils and staff had protection. Secondly, he had to prepare for the imminent arrival of 650 pupils and staff evacuated from Dulwich College – though in the event they only stayed for one term.

Thirdly, he had to tackle falling enrolment. Independent schools had been squeezed in the 1930s because of changing demographics, falling incomes and better state education. At Tonbridge, the pupil roll fell from 485 to 404 in the five years preceding the war. Then 60 pupils were withdrawn due to the conflict, leading to the closure of two houses.

Papers in the National Archives show that the War Office wanted a wholesale takeover of leading independent boarding schools so that they could be used by the state to help prosecute the war. Herwald Ramsbotham, President of the Board of Education from 1940 to 1941, fended off this attack by claiming such ‘requisitioning’ was ‘part of a covert attempt to secure their ultimate elimination’.

Despite saving the schools, the Board of Education noted in an internal paper in 1941 that Tonbridge had a ‘doubtful’ future. It was in good company, though, for Harrow, Haileybury and ten other schools were given the same status and five more were deemed at risk of closure.

The government responded in 1942 by setting up the Fleming committee to look at the relationship between the

A Duty to Serve Tonbridge School and the 1939-45 War

by David Walsh
(Third Millennium
Publishing, 2011)
ISBN 978-1906507600

This new book on Tonbridge School is part of the successful Third Millennium series on leading schools, but it is the first to drill down into one specific event: the Second World War. It proves not only that modern warfare had a big impact on Britain’s boarding schools but also that the schools had a big impact on modern warfare. Tonbridge was not a particularly military school, yet it still lost 415 old boys in the First World War and 301 in the Second.

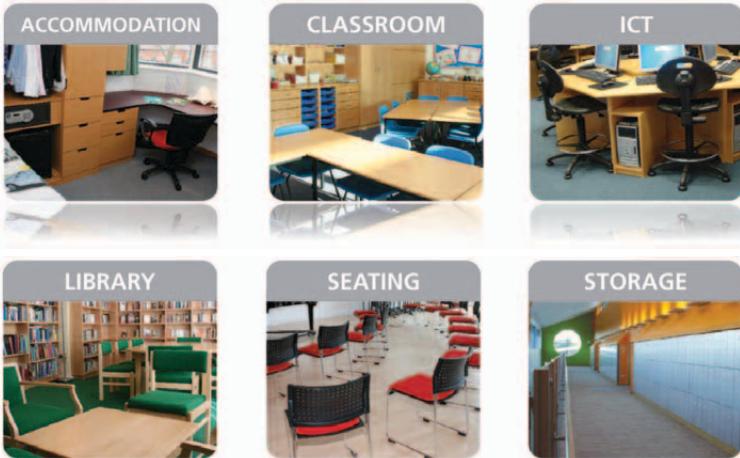
The book is more a history of the war through the eyes of old Tonbridgians than a history of the school. They include Field Marshal Lord Ironside, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1939/40 and later Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces.



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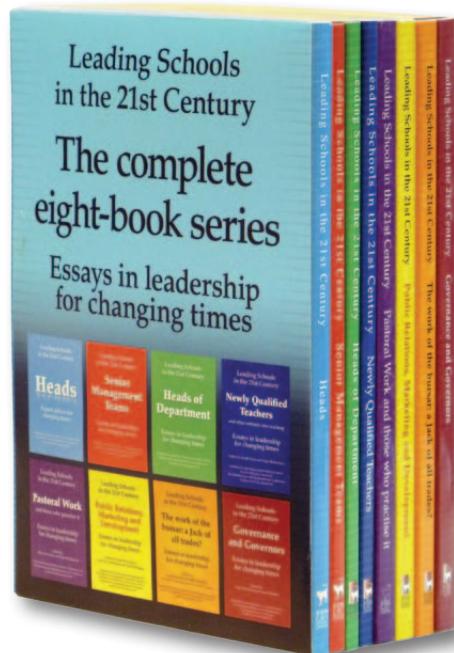
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'public schools' and the rest of the school system. It had the support of the sector but, by the time the committee reported in 1944, the worst problems had disappeared and their proposals for state-sponsored places made limited progress.

Thanks partly to Whitworth's energy, the number of Tonbridgians rose from 1941 onwards. This mirrored the situation elsewhere: Simon Batten's recent history of Bloxham School (also by Third Millennium) records a *Te Deum* when the number of pupils passed 200 in 1942.

By the end of the war, Tonbridge actually had more boys (415) than in 1939. This is remarkable given that the school's position in Kent put it at the eye of the storm. After Dunkirk, Whitworth had felt forced to develop the school's own evacuation plans. St Edward's in Oxford and Shrewsbury School both offered a new home, but the parents of day pupils vehemently opposed any move and – in September 1940 – it was decided to stay put. This was a risk as the Battle of Britain was fought in the skies above, though largely in the school holidays.

One of the fine illustrations in the book shows a pupil's diary detailing the six air raid warnings that took place on 2nd October, 1940, day two of the new school year. In the same month, a bomb landed near the chapel. Later in the war, a V1 caused extensive damage to the school's grounds. No one was seriously hurt, but pupils asleep in bed were blanketed with shards of glass. It is little wonder the school had its own tank traps and tall poles to deter gliders, though the decision to stay turned out to be the right one.

While the war affected Tonbridge more than most, the school was not a passive recipient. David Walsh recounts numerous tales of heroism by old boys in the different armed forces and on the different fronts of the war. As the book's advertising blurb states, there are tales of old boys 'from Dunkirk to D-Day, the Battle of Britain to the Bomber Offensive, Special Operations to the Burma Railway.' At the end of the book, Walsh notes that Tonbridge's war dead are buried across the world, from Malaysia to Sicily, Burma to Normandy and Tunisia to Thailand.

It is difficult to single out examples among the huge number of heroic deeds, but one that stands out for me is Desmond Hubble of the Special Operations Executive. He insisted on doing dangerous operational work co-ordinating resistance in France, but was caught and hanged in Buchenwald in September 1944.

Another moving story is that of Walter Eberstadt, who arrived at Tonbridge from Germany in 1936. After a year at Oxford and a short spell interned as an 'enemy alien', he ended the war as Captain Everitt, an officer in the British army. On arriving back in Hamburg after VE-Day, he found 'Victory goes to the head, defeat to the heart.'

Maurice Wiles, the school's head boy in 1942, provides perhaps the single clearest example of the nexus between the school and the war. He was summoned into service direct from Tonbridge on the advice of his elder brother's tutor at Christ's College, Cambridge, and ended up at Bletchley Park deciphering Japanese Army Air Force code.

Old Tonbridgians made their contribution on the home front too. Harold Newgass was awarded the George Cross for saving a large part of Liverpool by defusing a mine that had landed in a gasometer. Sir Leslie Rowan was Churchill's principal private secretary and accompanied him to the Potsdam conference. At Oxford, Norman Heatley worked on

manufacturing penicillin in large quantities so that its wonder properties could be more widely used as the war progressed.

The unifying theme of the book is camaraderie: among the school's wartime pupils and staff; between the school and the local community; and among officers and their men. Appropriately for a book remembering war, there are few moments of humour but there is a memorable anecdote of a former pupil's classical education coming in handy. At Arnhem, Brian Burnett needed to know where the enemy were. Unable to converse with a local Catholic priest, he resorted to Latin and was told 'Germani egressi sunt'.

Walsh knows his subject matter extraordinarily well and he writes flawlessly. He taught history at Tonbridge from 1972 to 2009, where his stories must surely have captured the imagination of his classes. My only quibble – and it is only a quibble – is the level of prior knowledge of Tonbridge's highways and byways that is expected of the reader.

The target audience is, of course, former pupils so that is understandable, but the book brings the war's impact into such sharp relief that it deserves a wider readership. (In the same vein, I hope the publishers will soon produce an equally good book on independent boarding schools as a whole, rather than just monographs on individual schools – the sector should not speak only unto itself.)

When the carnage of the First World War ended, the nation promised, 'We will remember them'. HMC schools have solemnly kept that promise. Of all the rituals in which I participated as a boy at Repton, it is Remembrance Sunday that remains most vivid. At the war memorial in the centre of a cloistered garden, we sensed a genuine empathy for those earlier generations that passed through the school's arch on their way to the battlefield ('the gate without blame', according to the school motto). In 2012, the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War, it is also fitting to note that the national memorial of the conflict was opened at Pangbourne College in 2000 by the Queen.

At the end of the First World War, a Tonbridge housemaster called Henry Stokoe produced *Tonbridge School and the Great War*. This new book is partly a sequel to that work and it will similarly help Tonbridge remember its former pupils who served, including those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The Duke of Wellington famously claimed 'The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton.' While giving full weight to the horrors of war, David Walsh has shown that later victories owed just as much to schools like Tonbridge.

Nicholas Hillman has recently had his research on policymaking towards independent boarding schools during World War Two published in the History of Education.



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Good Wit and Capacity

A History of Colfe's School 1972-2002

Dr Vivian Anthony
Spiegl Press

David Starkey's marketing people most probably rested easy in their beds when they saw the historic confines of Dr Vivian Anthony's history. They might originally have feared competition from lurid tales of Elizabethan London or even the dramatic 17th century re-founding of the school by Abraham Colfe. And they would know too the seductive pull of a hazy Edwardian cover photograph, draping a veil of dreamy otherworldliness over a susceptible browser.

Colfe's lends itself to historic sweep all right. So it must have come as a mighty relief to the Starkey camp when they discovered Dr Anthony had eschewed the ruffs and jerkins and started his tale in the year Idi Amin was expelling Ugandan Asians. A year when Colfe's had a problem.

By 1972 Headmaster Herbert Beardwood had completed 25 years of service. He had dealt with the aftermath of the terrors of war but now, as he neared retirement, a new force threatened his proud school. The ILEA was not going to allow Colfe's to retain its status as a selective grammar. Indeed, ILEA grammars with long histories were closing, merging or



*A Guard of Honour for
Prince Michael when he
visited Colfe's School.
He is accompanied by the
Headmaster, Vivian Anthony.*

becoming comprehensives. Big names such as St Marylebone Grammar vanished as a result of what their Headmaster, Patrick Hutton, called the ILEA's "criminal lunacy". Would Colfe's fare any better?

Frankly, what happens next is gripping stuff. The prose may be measured, precise and cool, but the scale is Shakespearian as staff, pupils, parents and governors throw themselves into battle. The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers was tested to the limits; tactics were complex. Procrastination and brinksmanship played their parts, and Dr Anthony deftly captures the on-the-ground fears of teachers and parents as well as the titanic ideological struggles taking place at national level.

By the time Dr Anthony himself becomes Headmaster in 1976, the decision has been made, and it falls to him to steer the school through the birth pangs of independence. He describes his own years at the helm with modest detachment: future histories are likely to be rather more effusive.

The Rubicon crossed, Colfe's marched swiftly, passionate about offering its services to children from all backgrounds, (a goal still espoused by the trustee, the Leathersellers Company). The school under Dr Anthony, and then Dr David Richardson, becomes known to us not through a dreary iteration of events that would be of interest only to those who were caught up in them, but by virtue of the author's profound understanding of the sector.

His ability to remain both dispassionate and empathetic is rare. And the stage never shrinks, for we journey through Assisted Places, co-education, rising academic standards, the introduction of appraisal and league tables, fine new facilities and a much expanded offer outside the classroom. We are also privy to the thoughts and actions of a mighty cast, from support staff to major political figures of the day. Indeed, anybody thinking of running a school really ought to read this book. One learns which relationships simply *have* to work if a school is to work. The detail is never dull because its relevance is universal.

The story closes with the arrival of Andrew Chicken and the 350th anniversary of the re-founding of the school. In the celebratory game against the MCC, the school needed one run from the last over in order to win the game. They didn't get it. I was rather dejected on reading that. Why? Because after finishing this history, I felt like an Old Boy. Maybe David Starkey should be concerned after all.

Chris Edwards is the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School.

Teaching and the Seven Virtues

2: Wisdom

Observing a lesson in the Classics Department, Alistair Macnaughton found himself transported to Mount Olympus. Here he met Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, recently signed up by HMC Communications as an Agony Aunt. In this brief vision she shared some of the early correspondence with him



Alistair Macnaughton.

Dear Minerva

As a new HMC Head, I am very nervous about my first annual conference and afraid that no one will want to talk to me. What would you advise? (Nervous from North East Division)

Not to get your HMC knickers in a twist for a start! Why not stay put in your lovely hotel room, slip on your silk dressing gown, empty the minibar and watch the Conservative Party Conference on your television instead? Then you can tell people back at school that 'the Conference' went swimmingly – and mean it as well!

Dear Minerva

Last week I worked a 96-hour week and ended up only seeing my partner twice – and both at school events. What can I do about my work/life balance? (Workaholic from West Division)

If you're so hung up about your work/life balance, you shouldn't have become an independent school teacher in the first place. What do you want to see your 'partner' for anyway? I'll bet when you do have a night in, all that happens is that you talk shop, drink too much Shiraz and fall asleep head first into the spaghetti bol. There'll be plenty of time for your precious work/life balance when you retire at 86.

Dear Minerva

I am a simple, down-to-earth, heart-on-my-sleeve Headmaster who is constantly being inundated with glitzy awards and plagued by *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and the like for articles and quotes when all I ever wanted to do is get on with running my school. What can I do to escape the Noose of Celebrity? (Bewildered from London Division)

Is there any chance your pals at The Sunday Times need a new columnist with supernatural powers and a bona fide talking owl on her shoulder? Could you put in a good word for me? Please! Perhaps if I gave you the owl?

Dear Minerva

I have ten helicopter parents who are always hovering over my school as well as an aviary of hawks who fly in and sit in Reception for hours waiting for me to smooth their feathers. What should I do? (Intimidated from Irish Division)

Shut the windows of your office, bar the door and tell your PA you're not coming out until the RSPB comes to collect them. Fans of the comedies of Plautus will also know the value of Heads inventing an identical twin whom you can pretend to be when you walk through Reception to the main doors in shades and a black leather jacket.

Dear Minerva

As a deputy head with a particular responsibility for Dress and Appearance, I find I can't make up my mind. Would it be better to put my girls in kilts or trousers? Should their hair be up or merely off the face? Exactly how much make-up is 'minimal'? Should top buttons always be done up and what do you do about these new shirts that make it impossible to tell? (Confused from South Central Division)



'Minerva with an HMC head but no owl.'

Who do you think I am: Jupiter? The King of the Gods himself wouldn't have a clue with problems like these. Can't you just pretend to be looking the other way when they come into Assembly?

Dear Minerva

I keep worrying I'm not keeping up with Child Protection legislation. What are your views on the most recent changes in the law? (Worried from East Division)

Do you think I have the time to be worrying about this? I'm a goddess, not a civil servant – and if you've read your Ovid you'll know that Roman Gods and Goddesses don't tend to be sticklers for Child Protection anyway. As for Health and Safety, well, don't get me started!

Dear Minerva

All I keep thinking about is the Charity Commission and what it's threatening to do. Last night I dreamt that there was a knock on my door and Dame Suzi Leather was standing on the step with a clipboard in her hand...

STOP! Can I point out that Conference & Common Room is a respectable magazine with a readership that will not tolerate smut.

But I was only wanting... (Name and address supplied)

ENOUGH! If these are the problems I have to deal with, I'm resigning. I mean, it's not as if I'm being paid to endure all these ramblings. Why don't you get Bernard Trafford instead? He may not yet be part of the Pantheon but at least he'll have the patience to listen!

Alistair Macnaughton, destined to remain strigiformally challenged, will return to his normal self in the next issue.



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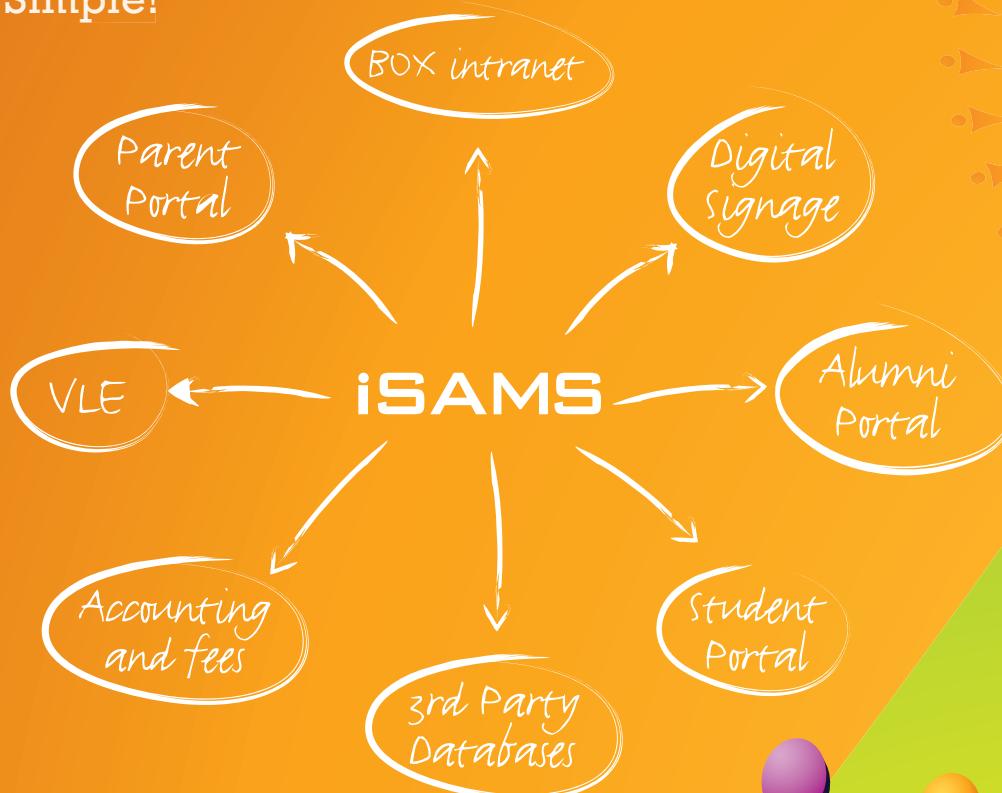
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