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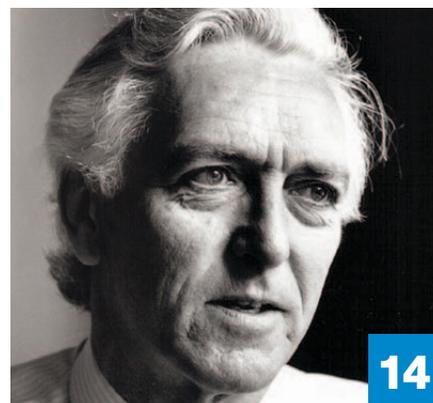
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Scaling new heights.
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In the midst of the rather non-descript triangle of tarmac that is the Broad Sanctuary of Westminster Abbey, where tourists play chicken with motorists trying to pass beyond the uniformed guardians of Dean's Yard, there stands a stone and marble column, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and erected in 1861. It is the Westminster School Memorial to those former pupils of the school who died in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny.

Lord Raglan and General Markham head the Crimea list, victims of a notoriously unhealthy campaign, and further down is Frederick Henty who, together with his brother George, enlisted in the subsequently much maligned Commissariat. George's letters home were printed in *The Morning Advertiser* and he became a special correspondent covering wars and world events and, later, as G A Henty, he wrote hugely popular and stirring adventure stories, featuring indomitable young heroes and, even, heroines. Henty's experiences in the Crimea were hellish and cost him his brother, but he seems to have sublimated them into a jingoistic optimism that the right kind of character could overcome any challenges. It was all about having leadership qualities.

The Crimean War was a shambles on every side, but it gave rise to a great many changes for the better. George Henty's letters home were among thousands sent by all sorts of combatants, to the fury of the Army and the Government. Far more significant were the despatches of William Howard Russell published in *The Times*, the photographs of Roger Fenton and the work of women serving as army nurses. Tactical innovations such as the use of railways and the telegraph meant that this was the first modern war as well as the last old one.

The geopolitical results of the war are still with us and the Crimea is once again a focus of crisis in international relations. Governments still rail against leaks and, much as he may dislike the *Blackadder* school of history, Mr Gove would have been much crosser with the Poet Laureate, Tennyson no less, who excoriated Crimean tactics in *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854). 'Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die' has become the epitaph of the serving soldier then and now.

Wars should not be allowed to pass unchallenged and each generation should be able to point to its own protest. Tony Richardson's film, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968) and Richard Attenborough's *Oh! What a Lovely War* (1969) were as much in response to the contemporary Vietnam war as they were about the conflicts they seemed to describe. And, once again, the issue was the quality of leadership.

It is safe to assume that G A Henty would have featured largely in the reading matter of the young P G Wodehouse, who began to earn his living as a writer in 1902, the year Henty died. Both men might be seen as portraying idealised English archetypes, but of very different kinds.

Wodehouse was a true son of Empire. His father was a judge in

Editorial

Hong Kong whose children were brought up in England under the care of a series of formidable aunts. These dragons featured large in the idyllic world Wodehouse created in exile, far from the depressing realities of Britain at war and in the Depression. His detachment from reality was clearly illustrated by his misadventures during the Second World War, which damaged his reputation.

As well as those who thought he had let the side down in the war, there were those who thought he brought the country, or at least the upper classes, into disrepute by creating such characters as Bertie Wooster and Lord Emsworth. Sir Patrick Deane, our Ambassador in Washington, is reported as arguing against making Wodehouse a Companion of Honour in 1967 because he gave currency to ‘aspects of the British character we are doing our best to eradicate’. Silly ass!

But Wodehouse was not without political insight. His portrayal of Sir Oswald Mosely Bt as the ‘black shorts’ leader Sir Roderick Spode Bt brought the powerful weapon of ridicule to bear on that unattractive demagogue, whilst the newt-fancying Gussie Fink-Nottle gave Ken Livingston access to soft spots in the hearts of those who disapproved of his politics but admired his eccentricity.

In some of his more philosophical moments, Bertie Wooster ascribes the success that seems invariably to result from the plans of Jeeves to his understanding of the Psychology of the Individual. Jeeves, famously, thought Nietzsche ‘fundamentally unsound’ and he would not have approved of the Superman style of leadership seen in the current Crimean crisis and endorsed by the intensely personal style of contemporary political leaders throughout the world. But, as a student of Spinoza, he might argue that intuition is the greatest mental virtue a leader can have.

Now that Heads have been reclassified as leaders, this is an important issue in schools – and not only at the top. Leadership qualities are being developed in pupils and staff at every school level, as can be seen in the following pages. Just as technology transformed military tactics, so it has transformed the administration of schools. Information is available on an unprecedented scale and what is needed now is discrimination in using it. Teamwork is vital and requires excellent communications skills. Excellence once achieved has to be sustained, outcomes and KPIs are the currency of success. Is there not a danger that schools have become treadmills in perpetual motion?

When William Jones, the founder of Monmouth School, had made his pile, he showed where his true priorities lay by paying the school’s ‘lecturer’ more than its Headmaster and endowing an annual sermon to be preached in London. Jones was as keen a merchant and as good a linguist as any modern entrepreneur, but he acknowledged a higher purpose. Our schools must continue to mould good citizens who understand that leadership is nothing without a healthy society.



Quick wit

Christopher Martin looks at the art of leadership

Headmastering has been compared to having a middle-aged affair – exhilarating in prospect but exhausting in reality, though how Headteachers are supposed to know this, heaven knows.

Headteachers' loyalty to their schools is of course laudable, but can be carried too far. This trait is most often to be found in the prospectus, where the temptation to exaggerate the good and obscure the bad is usually irresistible. Examples are legion, but some do stick in the mind: 'At St B's, all boys are treated as individuals... All boys play rugby.' Reference to a 'relaxed atmosphere' probably means there is skate boarding in the corridors; and an 'aim to develop fully rounded students' is likely to mean poor exam results or, perhaps, excellent catering.

The urge of one Head to show off her children in an assembly to best advantage to an Ofsted Inspector came unstuck when one girl started to think for herself. "Samantha, what's grey, collects nuts and runs up and down trees?" Samantha furrowed her brow and eventually replied, "I know the answer's supposed to be Jesus, but it sounds more like a squirrel."

Heads are required to respond to the needs and ambitions of at least four different constituencies: governors, staff, parents and pupils. You could, of course, also include the government, the local authority, the press and a galaxy of other vested interests. They are also expected to be responsible for the upkeep of their buildings and many will have found themselves from time to time on their knees under a sink mending leaks or sweeping the school playground before a parents evening.

However, they tend to balk at the bigger tasks such as mending the roof, even though many a roof has required mending. Post war schools, built on a shoe-string, tended to employ the flat roof principles favoured by Sir Anthony Part. These were notorious for having no known escape route for accumulating rainwater, which eventually burst in torrents through the weakest part, inevitably over the science labs.

One of the few cheering things known about Sir Anthony, whose name is otherwise associated with oaths in various languages, is his encounter with the recruiting sergeant he met as war broke out. He had initially favoured joining the infantry, but was tactfully persuaded by the sergeant to apply for the tank regiment instead, on the grounds that it would be better to be known as trooper Part than as private Part.

The need to worship at the altar of Statistics represents a comparatively new departure for Heads. Everything that moves, especially pupils, now needs to be assessed against baseline criteria, broken down not only by age and sex – as most of us are – but by effort, achievement, expectation, initiative, creativity, athletic ability *etc.* Never again will people be so thoroughly analysed in all aspects of their life as they will be while at school.



Christopher Martin

Popularity is something that almost invariably eludes Heads within their schools. Outside, things are very different, for there they are surrounded at conferences by other Heads and feel much more secure, knowing that they are not alone – that others share their insecurity.

Things need not invariably get as bad as one conversation overheard at an alumni dinner:

"I must confess I really don't like the Head very much."

"Don't worry about it. Just eat the vegetables."

Opposition in any academic institution is to be expected, for no two teachers can agree on anything, except that the young are going to hell in a handcart and that the powers that be – especially their Head – haven't a clue how to arrest the process. If only they could come round to John Keble's conclusion that opposition is a sure sign of divine intervention.

Salvador Dali's observation that the only difference between him and a madman was that he was not mad, must haunt many Heads still as they fret in the wee small hours over the levels of odium and opposition manifested towards them by their staff, especially towards the end of term when tempers are frayed.

They should, however, take heart from Hilaire Belloc who, at one point, stood as an MP. He told his advisors before his first election speech that he intended to state unequivocally that he was a Catholic. They were shocked by such a prospect, fearing that the controversial nature of such a declaration would wreck his chances at the ballot box, but he was adamant. Thus from the outset he confronted the issue head on: "I am a Catholic. I go to Mass every day. If you reject me for this, I shall thank God for sparing me the indignity of representing you in Parliament." He was elected.

Just occasionally, though, a Head's heart lifts as he deludes himself into thinking that others actually approve of what he's up to. Faced on his retirement with a parent who had glowered at him consistently throughout his time there, one Head was astonished to hear her say: "Your successor won't be as good as you've been."

Secretly gratified by this apparent expression of appreciation, he replied modestly, "Oh no, I'm sure you're wrong about that."

"No, I'm not," she continued. "My family have seen four Heads here and each one has been worse than the last."

On the other hand, it is well known that power, all too often, turns out to be a powerful aphrodisiac, and this applies to

ALCOHOL AWARENESS

(What can be known should be known)

AFTER 'THE GOWNS OF RADLEY'

(From syringes, cardboard and courts to Government Advisor)

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(Suitable for all age groups)

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(Not all glitz and glamour)

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(Drugs, Addiction and Recovery)

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(From stock market millionaire to America's toughest jail)

BANGED UP ABROAD

(Teacher, drug smuggler, convict, graduate)

INSIDE OUT

(Crime, prisons and offenders - the role the arts can play)

A NEW LIFE WITH DISABILITIES

(Helicopter down cuts short military career)

PICTURING WAR

(Conflict Photography from the front line)

RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES

(Using life lessons learned through sport to survive)

BULLYING

(Fists and words leave bruises)

LOVE THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

(Body Image, Self Esteem, Body Confidence)

MEALTIMES AND MILESTONES

(Moving on from Anorexia)

ATHLETE TO ADDICTION

(Are there any limits to exercise?)

FOOD FOR LIFE

(Learn how even small change in your diet will have profound effects on every aspect of your life)

SHORT SLEEVES, HAPPY MINDS

(Helping to understand Self Harm amongst young people)

HOW TO STAY SANE IN AN INSANE WORLD

(The A-Z of Good Mental Health)

POSITIVE VOICE

(HIV/AIDS - knowledge saves lives)

SEXUAL HEALTH

(Let's talk about sex)

SMOKING - YOUR CHOICE

(Not just another anti smoking lecture)

HOW TO MAKE A SMALL FORTUNE GAMBLING

(Start with a large one)

ON THE TURN OF A CARD

(Compulsive gambling costs you more than just money)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT / PREPARING FOR INDEPENDENCE

(Nobody plans to fail - they just fail to plan) / (Life skills for leaving home)

PARENTS - PARENTING FOR PREVENTION

(6 stages to acceptance)

ANTHONY McLELLAN

CHIP SOMERS

BOB TAIT and BARRY EVANS

STEVE ANDREW

OLI HENDERSON

JIM SMITH

MANDY SALIGARI

SHAUN ATTWOOD

SANDRA GREGORY

ANGELA FINDLAY

STEVE PENDLETON

RICK FINDLER

JOHN HOSKISON

ROBERT HIGGS

NATASHA DEVON

CONSTANCE BARTER

MARIE-CLAIRE PRUST

TINA LOND-CAULK

NATASHA DEVON

JEREMY THOMAS

EMMA COLE

ROZ BICEN

ROGER HARDING

REG STARKEY

STEVE ANDREWS

ROGER HARDING

MANDY SALIGARI

Heads just as much as to anyone who has charge over others. This regularly turns out to be manifested by the Head falling in love with the sound of his own voice. The Head, asked to give an address in a neighbouring school, was only half way through after half-an-hour, when he graciously observed, "Am I going on too long? There's no clock at the back of the hall", at which a voice from the back of his somnolent audience replied, "No, but there is a calendar."

Anyone, Head or not, who is rash enough to ask his audience in mid-speech if they can all hear him properly, risks the retort, "Yes, but I don't mind swapping with someone who can't." And one should remember that it was said of Proust

that for a man so short of breath, he was very long winded.

Ramsay MacDonald was said to have the gift of compressing the least possible amount of thought into the maximum possible number of words. Both these cautionary examples point to a need to cultivate brevity at all costs. *The Lord's Prayer* has 52 words and the American Constitution fits onto a single sheet of paper, so one may imagine the effect on the Head who asked a junior colleague to run the school chess society, only to find a draft of its constitution thudding onto his desk running to 94 pages.

Faced with any tidal wave of verbiage, one longs for the gift of the ultimate put-down. Admiration for those gifted in this field is universal. Sir Anthony Eden, summoned to see Mussolini, found himself confronted by a vast expanse of deep pile carpet separating him from the immense desk, off which you could fly a B57 bomber, behind which crouched the diminutive Duce.

A range of different coloured telephones was lined up in front of him. He launched into a diatribe against the Allies, ending with the statement, "If I lift one telephone here, a hundred thousand troops from the mountains of Greece to the Pillars of Hercules will rise up and win a glorious victory." Eden digested this information slowly. "What a pity if all you needed was a cup of tea."

His mentor, Winston Churchill, was seldom lost for words, yet even he, following his first unsuccessful meeting with de Gaulle, asked his parliamentary secretary, David Eccles, "David, what is the opposite of Vive la France?" Later, after the war, when the mutual antagonism had subsided, de Gaulle was invited to address both Houses of Parliament. Eccles asked Churchill if the general had changed at all. "He used to look like a bottle of hock. Now he looks like a bottle of burgundy."

Rival authors have a long history of devastating criticism, none less than the American Ambrose Pierce who, in his misanthropic and aptly titled book *Devil's Dictionary*, wrote of another's work: 'The covers of this book are too far apart.' Dorothy Parker, queen of the acerbic aphorism, took no prisoners in her literary criticism either. 'This is not a book to put down lightly. Rather it is a book to cast into the furthest corner of the room.' Challenged by friends one evening to make something funny of the word Horticulture, she came up instantly with: "You can take a whore to culture but you can't make her think."

But then one expects brilliance from anyone who could state with conviction that the only sign that the English have a sense of humour is the Albert Memorial. Putting one over our cousins in Australia is a national hobby of course, and not only on a rugby pitch. Tony Hancock's popularity stemmed in no short measure from this gift with his sidekick which enabled him to imbue every comment with undisguised contempt. "Does Magna Carta mean nothing to you? Did she die in vain?"

For most of us, however, deprived of the wit to fashion an apposite retort on the spot, the *esprit d'escalier* is the closest we can get. Diderot coined the expression to describe the clever comeback which only occurs to us when it is too late to deliver it.

Christopher Martin was Headmaster of Bristol Cathedral School and Millfield.

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.



Young face

Imogen Parker, aged 16 and from Sheffield High School (GDST), was selected from thousands of young hopefuls to be unveiled as the Young Face of Clothes Show 2013.

In December 2013, at the NEC in Birmingham, she starred in their educational campaign. Imogen was spotted at the show in 2012 by Select Model management and was given this role as she is 'a natural in front of the camera and oozed effortless chic in every look'.

Imogen was invited to attend the Clothes Show this year to do catwalks, to chat to the public about being Young Face Of The Clothes Show and to encourage the newly scouted models. She also features in the Save the Date page for the Clothes Show December 2014.

Leadership for Life

Chris Muller describes an exciting and unique opportunity for girls

In today's rapidly changing world the skill of leadership is becoming an ever more demanding and demanded requirement from employers.

Too often businesses and politicians criticise the educational establishment for failing to produce the leaders of tomorrow. Whenever one turns on the TV or radio or engages in social media, political and business conversation frequently laments the current state of leadership and calls for more effective leadership of our public institutions and private enterprises. Indeed, almost every problem that we face in the 21st century does and will continue to require effective leadership. We, as a country, will need individuals who can manage change, articulate ideas and motivate people.

The skills of leadership are the essential skills for life: the ability to deal with personal and professional conflict; to control one's emotions in the face of uncertainty and pressure; to motivate and manage one's colleagues and peers; and, finally, to communicate one's ideas and opinions concisely and convincingly.

That is why at Sir William Perkins's School (SWPS) we have launched a brand new initiative called Leadership for Life – a two-year course for sixth formers providing them with these essential skills for work and life. It is a unique programme that

has been devised by senior staff at the School in consultation with business leaders. SWPS Leadership for Life runs across the two years of the girls' sixth form study, and comprises four sections:

Smart Choices – how to make the best decisions in work and life.

Conflict Coaching – how to resolve conflicts amongst work colleagues, friends and family.

A Force for Change – how to lead and implement change.

Dynamic Communication – how to talk so that people will listen.

The course, the only one of its kind in the UK, provides an opportunity for the girls at SWPS to become leaders of tomorrow, learning how to manage change effectively and developing their emotional and social intelligence.

At SWPS we believe that the sixth form is a springboard – a bridge between the safe support network of school and the independence of higher education. We celebrate successes of all kinds – academic, sporting, musical, dramatic – and our vision is to build confidence, integrity and excellence in a caring, innovative and happy community so that students leave with the best chance of fulfilling their potential and feeling ready to take on the world.

Results.





Although academic success is our priority, education is about more than just top grades. Educating the whole person is something that all schools claim to do, but our strength is the breadth of curricular and extra-curricular activities available. We encourage students to get involved in all that is on offer, to develop their interests, interpersonal and teamwork skills, and to be forward-thinking.

The sixth form years, especially, bring a host of those opportunities, and students already lead the way in all areas of school life, receiving a structured programme of support and one-to-one help from their tutors. The vast majority go on to Russell Group and Times Top 30 Universities. So what are the girls actually learning in Leadership for Life? In the first year of their sixth form, the girls study two parts of the course: Smart Choices and Conflict Coaching.

In **Smart Choices**, the girls will be taught how decisions are actually made in the workplace and on a personal level. They will find out what factors influence every decision that we make, and what measures they can put in place so they can improve their own decision-making ability. In doing so, the girls will look at case studies ranging from politics to business, from science to art, examining how decisions were made and if they were effective or not.

After learning about decision-making, the girls embark on a study of **Conflict Management**. They will review a variety of situations, all of which are in dramatic form, where conflict is occurring. Scenarios examined are familiar flash-points, likely to take place in the home and at the workplace. Through discussion and debate, students will be provided with practical tools to cope with and reduce conflict. Throughout the course the girls will also learn how and why conflict arises, together with being taught what they can do to prevent or reduce its impact.

By the end of their first sixth form year, the girls will be ready to embark on a study of the nature of leadership itself, together with the role that communication plays in establishing an outstanding leader.

The upper sixth form girls begin their final year of the school with a course in transformational leadership. **Force for Change** is an outstanding opportunity for the students to understand the nature of leadership itself. They will learn how teams can be most effectively organised and what it takes to create lasting change in any organisation they are leading.

The characteristics of successful leaders will be examined together with the core principles of leadership itself. They will also understand why change can be frightening and resisted and what emotions are thrown up when change occurs. They will look at the source of any leader's power, both how it is acquired and how it can be reduced.

In the final part of the Leadership for Life course, **Dynamic Communication**, the students will understand the importance of communication and how it can be improved.

Too often in business, politics or life, poor leadership and bad decision making is caused by poor communication. In this course the students will examine how to adopt a more effective method of conversing and communicating. In doing so, they will be provided with practical tips to ensure that when they speak, people listen.

In an ever-competitive world of globalisation and internationalism, the skills of leadership are not an additional extra. They are an absolute must for any student about to enter the world of work and seeking to make a real difference.

Chris Muller is currently deputy head at Sir William Perkins School and will become the school's Head in September 2014.

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GOT
IT

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Very young leaders

Jane Bewick Green discovers that not all school leaders are Heads



Choices.

How do you spot a potential leader, and at what age do you think they might begin to show their star qualities? Andy Moon has an excellent track record of spotting leaders in pupils as young as nine years of age. Andy is a sports teacher at Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School in Staffordshire and runs the school's Young Leaders programme.

"I have 13 pupils at the moment," he explains. "They're taken from Years 4, 5 and 6, and act as positive role models around the school. They've been chosen because of their good communication skills, because they are reliable, responsible and able to engage with younger children as well as older children." The team meets for half-an-hour each week in break times. They work on improving their personal skills and will have the opportunity to host and run events at school.

Andy's previous role was as competitions manager with Staffordshire County Council, working with a number of schools. "I've seen the competitions and leadership programmes work well in senior schools across the county and thought pupils here could really benefit from it too. The idea is eventually to host a competition day and invite other local schools to come and join in with a multi-skills, multi-sport event."

For the moment, the Young Leaders at Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School help out with school events throughout the year, but particularly Sports Day. Andy says, "They can actually run the events by themselves and do the communications, the refereeing, organising, scoring, manage the teams, and even tell the teachers what to do. I think sometimes the other pupils respond better to the Young Leaders than they do to the teachers!"

But it's not just about sport; it's about building confidence and being good communicators in everything. The pupils

enjoy the responsibility: "It's a bit scary when we put our red shirts on," they chorus. "They say 'Young Leader' on the back so everyone knows who we are." The task for today's meeting is to organise a multi-skills event for the Reception children. The Young Leaders have split themselves into four working groups and chosen four events to run: Simon Says; Head or Catch; Football Skills; Dish and Domes.

The children were specially chosen by Andy, who always keeps a lookout for potential candidates. "These pupils are always on time. They never forget their kit or books. They're polite, helpful and inspire their peers. It's reassuring for me to know that they're the pupils usually chosen later on in their school careers to be house captains or head girl or head boy – voted for by the other pupils in the school. It lets me know I've selected the right ones."

Do they know what they want to do when they grow-up? "I want to be a barrister," says one. "I want to be a PE teacher," says another. "I want to be a doctor," says another. "I'd need good communication skills to talk to patients and then do clinics and plan things on the computer."

"Eventually I'd like to get the Years 1, 2 and 3 involved," says Andy, "especially for Sports Day." This year, the current young team chose new members from Year 4 to join them to replace those who have left to go to the senior school. When they move up to senior school, there's an official qualification on leadership that they can take. These youngsters already know it could help their university and job applications and are polishing their CVs right now.

Jane Bewick Green is a freelance writer, broadcaster and journalist.

Equip, support and develop pupils and staff

Sarah Gornall examines mentoring and coaching in the school context



Peer mentoring.

“I’m more confident than I’d ever have thought was possible” said Sally, one of four Y8 and Y9 students presenting to an invited audience of governors, teachers, university lecturers and consultants at a recent celebration of coaching at the Ralph Allen School in Bath. All were participants in the school’s peer mentoring programme called ‘equip’. All talked movingly of the growth in their confidence and communication skills as a result of being involved in the scheme.

The name, equip, is an acronym based on the five stage process that students learn: engage, question, understand, imagine and plan. It is the latest manifestation of a long tradition of mentoring and coaching initiatives in the school, where forms of peer mentoring date back to the 1990s. Through taking part, young people develop the essential skills

of enquiry, interpersonal relations and creativity, with positive outcomes for themselves and for those they mentor.

The highly experiential programme is run by inclusion manager Christine Charles. “We see the students develop along the journey into confident, open individuals who become positive role models and assets to the school” she commented. She described how, in recent principal interviews, where equip students took part in a session with the candidates, they impressed staff and governors with their conversation skills and maturity.

The programme includes a range of practical mentoring tools, role play, games and challenge activities. It develops relationships for learning, teamwork, collaboration and individual confidence.

Y8 students follow a 12-week programme of two-hour sessions, followed by six hour-long sessions in Years 9 and 10. To be accepted as a peer mentor, they need not only to complete the course but also to be assessed on the quality of their engagement and dialogue skills. They have to be able to start conversations, listen and observe, ask open questions, summarise conversations, agree action plans and end conversations well.

The Y8 students then use these tools to help them mentor Y6 pupils in primary schools, whilst the Y9 and Y10 students mentor Y7 and Y8 students.

All aspects of the programme are appreciated by participants. Y8 mentor Ben said: “the team exercises help us to give others emotional and mental support”. Tackling a climbing wall with a group of fellow pupils he hardly knew helped him to develop the skills to encourage others, who were nervous and outside their comfort zone, to do things they were not sure they were able to do.

Ella, a Y9 senior peer mentor, enjoyed the exercises on body language and decision making and found they helped her communicate better with family and friends as well as the fellow student she was mentoring. While she thought of herself as quite a confident talker in general terms before the programme started, she appreciated how she had now learnt techniques to help other people think things through for themselves.

“I think much more about what I’m saying. Peer mentoring is not about giving answers but making the person more at ease and helping them to come up with their own answers,” she said. Ella’s remark reveals the close connection between the school’s model of mentoring and the coaching that is a feature of the culture that Headteacher Libby Lee has been keen to develop throughout the school.

Over the years, coaching, using both internal and external coaches for dedicated work and also a coaching style of teaching and leading, has been used to develop and support the skills of the Head, senior and middle leaders, share good practice across departments and increase student resilience and independence. The school’s coaching journey forms one of the case studies in a recent book *Coaching and Learning in Schools: A Practical Guide* (SAGE, 2013) by Sarah Gornall and Mannie Burn.

The Head comments: “We found that we were not always coaching somebody about simply what happened with a particular professional issue. Coaching helped us to see and acknowledge that we are whole people and that everything that goes on in our lives affects what we are... The senior leadership team were working together as a team and so we could use the same tools to discuss issues and in performance management.

“We were starting to become more emotionally intelligent, being able to voice our feelings, particularly the negative ones, which previously we might have kept buried. We were becoming more emotionally robust and flexible. This released us to move forward as a team.” She found that coaching had a significant impact on the people to whom it was offered and engaged with the local university to deliver a school-based MA module in coaching for both teaching and support staff.

The school also found that bringing a coaching approach to learning was enabling for both staff and pupils. In Libby’s words: “It is not about ‘I am a deliverer of knowledge’ to a

person who is going to absorb it, but nurturing and growing the person in front of you, giving them confidence, giving them the tools to learn with then watching them go off and do it themselves. So coaching absolutely ‘sits right’ as a learning methodology with what we do in the classroom. It is putting young people in charge of their own learning, of their own agenda and destiny.”

At the celebration of coaching which starts this article, associate governor Jane James, a leader and catalyst for innovation at nowhere-ecl, the school’s partner in developing the equip programme, made some powerful closing remarks. She spoke of her conviction that anyone who works in education is entitled to support, as the work they do is massively demanding and resource heavy, and of her belief that coaching maximises the potential of individuals to support others and enables the resources within a school and as a school community to be fully utilised.

In her words: “What it enables to happen, through the presence and skill of the coach, is moving beneath the surface of the very strong defences you have to have in a secondary school to be able to cope. Under that surface is all the anxiety, the uncertainty, the turmoil, the emotion, the stress, the projection of all the difficulties of all the lives that are going on in the school. Coaching enables that area to be accessed and supported so that any member of staff can go back out and continue to make learning and creativity happen.”

Ralph Allen is not the only school in the country to embed a coaching culture. There are further case studies of individual and whole school coaching throughout *Coaching and Learning in Schools*, as well as examples of how to enrich your coaching toolkit. The book ends with the following reflection:

Coaching, whether in its dedicated form or as a more informal approach, leads to practical outcomes, stimulates sense-making and personal growth, nurtures educators and helps learners flourish. It returns us to the concept of education as a process that develops innate capacities and strengths and draws out, or elicits, hidden or latent knowledge. It allows us to enrich informational learning with the transformative and to equip young people for their journey through the world. How can we afford to be without it?

Sarah Gornall is co-author with Mannie Burn of Coaching and Learning in Schools: A Practical Guide published by SAGE in February 2013 and co-author with Maryl Chambers and Guy Claxton of Building Learning Power in Action published by TLO Ltd in 2005.

She has had a cross phase career in education, as a secondary school teacher and deputy head, primary school governor and lecturer in Further and Higher Education. As director of Bristol Education Action Zone (2000-2005), she worked with nursery, primary and secondary schools in a challenging area of inner city Bristol to raise attainment. She is an experienced coach, supervisor and trainer, accredited with the International Coach Federation.

John Rae of Westminster

A study in educational leadership

John Rae was not the most obvious candidate for the Headmastership of Westminster when the position became vacant in 1970. His school and university careers had been unspectacular; he had never been a housemaster, head of department, or deputy head; his Nonconformist upbringing was not wholly confluent with Westminster's preeminent position at the heart of the Anglican establishment; and his short Headship of Taunton had been characterized by division.

Westminster's governors elected Rae as Head by a majority of one: one of the governors called him a 'dangerous red'; others thought that he was too young. Yet over the next 16 years Rae established himself as one of the most prominent reforming Heads in the country, successfully raising Westminster's academic standards and tackling many of the challenges faced by an independent school in the centre of London.

He was by no means universally popular and his leadership was not beyond criticism: he was accused of lacking a coherent vision; there was not always consistency between his talk and his actions; and he lacked the confidence to remove all of Westminster's incompetent naysayers.

Yet he has some lessons to teach us about effective educational leadership, as he left Westminster a much better school than he found it, implementing his unrelenting market-driven vision through an enigmatic combination of autocracy and democracy, accessibility and distance, risk-taking and demagoguery.

One of the central challenges faced by any Head of Westminster was its geographical location. The school was effectively landlocked, with little (if any) surrounding space into which it could expand. The site was designed for 300 pupils: by 1970 there were almost 500. The Dean and Chapter jealously guarded their accommodation arrangements next door, while the lack of space led to some bizarre arrangements: the masters' common room, for example, was on the ground floor of Rae's family home.

Pupils' sporting facilities were inconveniently dispersed around the capital. Furthermore, central London offered Westminster's pupils temptations to vices that, by 1970, had not been satisfactorily addressed. Rival Headmasters, in their schools' promotional material, could glance at the problems faced by a central London school, while their own establishments boasted rolling fields and comfortable physical distance from permissive urban iniquities.

Westminster's pupils were bright young things who used their intellectual capabilities to exercise scepticism of authority in all its forms. Yet, when Rae became Head, he noticed that many of those pupils failed to apply their talents when it came to formal assessments. The school's academic reputation was riding on a minority of high-fliers.



Matthew Jenkinson

Financially, Westminster was suffering from falling boarding numbers and increasing numbers of day pupils paying lower fees. The operation cost the same to run, but fee income was decreasing. The obvious response was to increase the number of day pupils to compensate for the decline in boarding income, yet there was nowhere to put them.

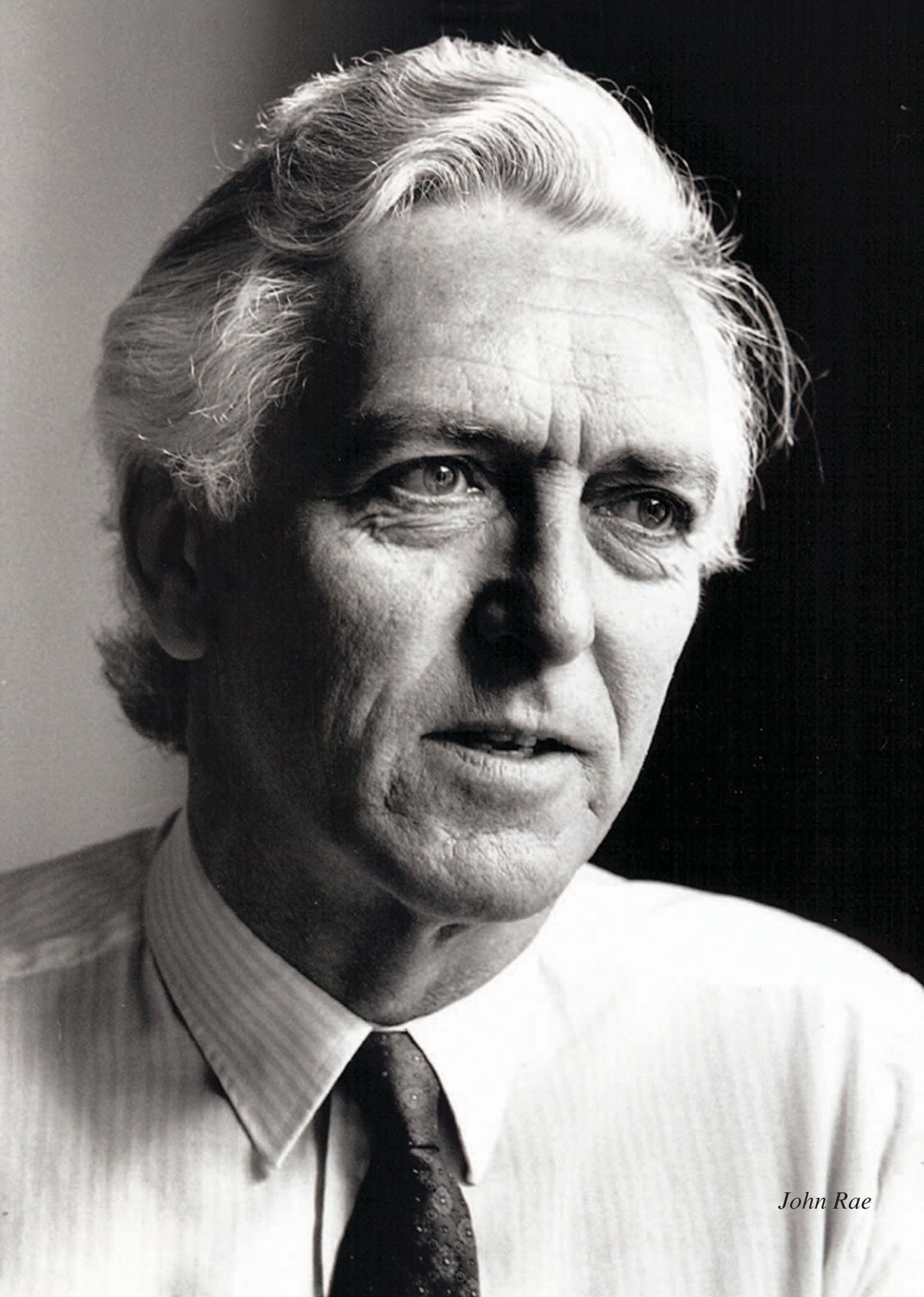
It is frequently suggested that followers look for leaders who are 'authentic', whose words match their deeds and who care passionately about their vision. There were several challenges to Rae's authenticity. First, he downplayed his minor-public-school, lower-second-degree personal narrative, using his later-in-life doctorate as a deflective veneer. Secondly, Rae himself was not initially totally sure *why* he wanted to be a Head, other than the fact that he needed a high salary to provide for his family, and he dreaded reaching his retirement with little to show 'but a leaving present and a round of applause at the final assembly'.

Thirdly, pure educational principles came second to less wholesome commercial considerations. For example, Rae believed there was something 'fundamentally wrong' with a society in which 'education and class had such an incestuous relationship', yet he would not commit commercial suicide by interfering when some Westminster parents pulled strings to get their underachieving children into Oxbridge.

Fourthly, he was privately pessimistic about his own capacity to be a great Head with a bold, heroic vision. 'I am not a gifted teacher ... not a Christian idealist ... or an innovator ... I am really a pessimist, a deist, an opportunist and a fixer'. The key was to make sure that his private reservations did not become public and that his commercial cynicism was communicated as a vision of sorts.

Because of his focus on commercial pragmatism – doing whatever he could to make Westminster more successful than its rivals – Rae played down having any vision at all, claiming that, beyond surviving, he had no 'grand design', 'no vision of how things ought to be'. Yet a vision does not need a label: a school's vision can be rooted in pragmatism, and even if a Head's priority is survival, they will institute a series of reforms and policies that, as a whole, constitute a vision.

Rae articulated his vision in his day-to-day leadership of Westminster, in his frequent forays into public debate, and in



John Rae

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a series of books. Even though market-driven entrepreneurial pragmatism took a firm priority, his policies were not totally devoid of principle. His vision was also characterized by high academic standards and ‘tolerance of individuality and nonconformity’.

Denial of a rigid overall vision is a vision in itself. Nonetheless, its piecemeal nature meant that it could lack clarity and coherence. Indeed, the more frustrated members of staff complained that there was lack of confidence in Rae’s leadership because ‘our priorities are not clear’.

Many of Rae’s reforms were laudable, but they were driven in the first instance by the market rather than principle. Rae knew that Westminster’s reputation for drugs put off fee-paying parents. He therefore decided to change the school rules to make it an offence to use illegal drugs anytime, anywhere. He insisted that all staff members ‘take responsibility for discipline’, especially when the issue was as serious as drugs. Even when faced with a boy smoking cannabis, following the death of the pupil’s father and attempted suicide of his mother, Rae resolved to rusticate him, to avoid negative gossip in Hampstead and Dulwich.

As with the drug problem, Rae was determined to raise Westminster’s academic standards, not just because he saw high academic standards as innately desirable, but because he saw it as the best way to attract more families to his school. To raise standards Rae saw that he had to change the academic philosophy of the school. When he arrived at Westminster, Rae observed an academic atmosphere closer to the freedom of a university than the carefully structured systems required for all pupils to thrive. The self-motivated high-flyers flourished, but the rest foundered.

‘You cannot’, Rae summarized it, ‘base a system of education on the eccentricities of genius’. The biggest reform Rae instigated here was the abolition of the system of accelerating the brighter pupils, sitting their A levels a year early, to devote a ‘seventh form’ year to preparing for Oxbridge. No longer would the best teachers devote their energies to this ‘seventh form’ at the expense of pupils in the rest of the school; the status of A levels would be heightened; and pupils would not specialize too early before they had adequate exposure to the full curriculum.

Another of Rae’s major reforms was driven by commercial considerations: his desire to improve Westminster’s academic performance and to increase numbers. Introducing girls to the school helped its numbers rise from 480 in 1970 to 630 in 1986, and it ensured that Rae had a larger pool from which to draw academically talented pupils.

Rae did have some less mercenary motives: there were already some girls taking lessons in the sixth form and giving them full membership of the school removed their ‘indeterminate status’; plus access to a boys’ school would help erode some of the stereotypical expectations of girls. Meanwhile abolishing Westminster’s entrance exam and relying on Common Entrance had the effect of attracting pupils from prep schools which could not afford to run a separate Westminster entrance class.

While taking a hard line on drugs was an increasingly uncontroversial policy (even if some accused him of turning Westminster into a police state), Rae’s relentless focus on commercial considerations, his abolition of the ‘seventh form’ and Westminster’s own entrance exam, plus the introduction of girls to the school, brought him into conflict with several constituencies.

Institutional power and the ability to wield patronage were not in themselves sufficient for Rae, or any Head, to exercise authority and gain respect from staff and pupils. Nor was it sufficient that Rae was a tall, attractive, intelligent, apparently confident, sociable and authoritative man. Even though he was a natural autocrat, Rae realised he could not throw his weight around to ensure that his vision of Westminster was realized.

Though he was temperamentally driven to arrive at Westminster immediately instituting the reforms he considered to be obvious, Rae tempered his enthusiasm and gave the impression he was listening to constituencies outside his own study door. Rae learnt the arts of institutional politics: ‘how to persuade, manipulate, intrigue and outmanoeuvre’.

He found it frustrating, nonetheless, that this style of leadership was so slow; that he felt obliged to refer issues to governors when he considered them unqualified to resolve those issues; that too many stakeholders would not sympathise with his commercial vision; and that a large amount of time was wasted discussing issues in masters’ committees, when Rae knew what his policy was going to be before he walked in the door.

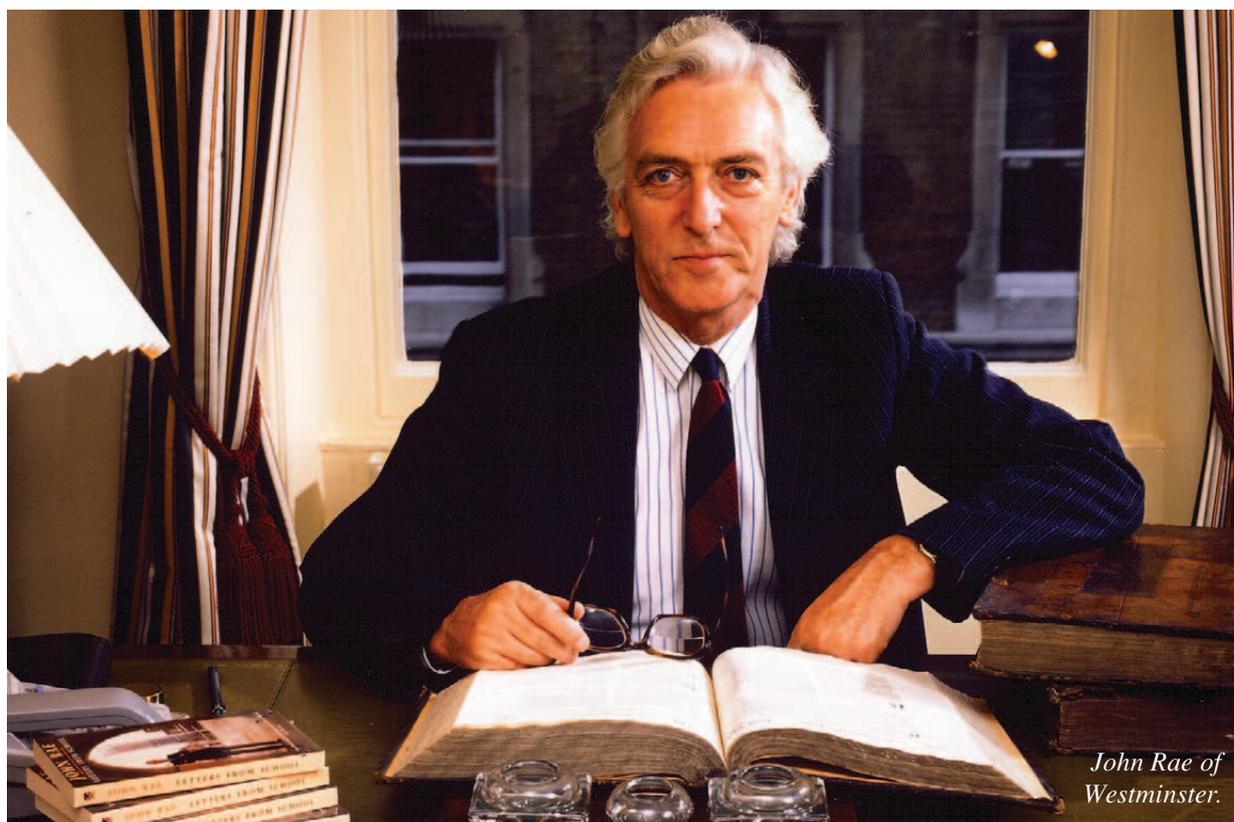
For all the talk of consensual leadership, Rae made some moves towards centralization. He realised that there were times to be democratic, but there were also times to be authoritative. Rae resolved to change Westminster’s rules on illegal drugs, whether or not the common room supported him. By eroding the powers of housemasters, he prevented conflicts that occurred when they applied discretionary interpretations of the school rules.

Rae was also keen on occasional displays of strength, making it clear that he was in charge. This style brought with it an element of risk: Rae admitted he did not always know what he would do if his tests of strength were themselves tested. One seemingly innocuous example was Rae’s injunction that Westminster’s pupils had to get their hair cut. If the pupils had refused, Rae would have faced the laughable scenario of sending boys home for something seemingly trivial, with a concomitant reduction in his standing and authority. In the event, they got their hair cut, but Rae conceded that he had no decent comeback if the boys had stood their ground.

Rae embraced this element of risk in his leadership. He believed that his pupils and staff craved leadership beyond ‘managerial competence’, ‘marketing skills’ or ‘ease of manner’; they wanted entrepreneurial, risk-taking, charismatic, ‘inspirational leadership’. He described himself as a ‘demagogue at heart’, convincing himself that he had the personal qualities necessary to sway crowds through rhetoric.

If Rae pursued a policy that appeared to be unpopular, he simply called a special assembly to declaim his logic. Rae admitted that he liked ‘flirting with danger’ on these public occasions and conceded that there was an ‘element of bluff’ in the construction of his authority. One of the biggest risks Rae took was in promoting Westminster publicly, embracing the media and demystifying the arcane world of the British independent school.

The risks here were manifold: Rae faced constant and open opposition to his personal values, potentially eroding his authority as an educational leader; Westminster was laid open to public scrutiny when its drug problems had not gone away; and Rae’s competitors could jealously lash out at this allegedly preening narcissist. But publicity was a central



John Rae of Westminster.

part of Rae's entrepreneurial style of leadership: he was determined to be a prominent player in how his school was perceived by the outside world.

In 1979 Rae invited the BBC into Westminster to put together a documentary on his school and – the ultimate risk – he allowed the producer and director to retain editorial control. Overall, the risk appeared to pay off. The site came across as less cramped than it really was; little mention was made of drugs; and Westminster was promoted as dinner party conversation for the chattering classes.

There was a complexity inherent in Rae's approach to accessibility. Some pupils claimed that their Head was not someone prominent in their lives, because they never saw him and he spent more time courting the media. This was unfair. Rae was unhappy sitting in his study; he much preferred 'Management By Wandering About': dining with the school, dropping into lessons or prep, following a single form around for the day, teaching new forms and taking part in impromptu games of cricket.

He interviewed all pupils in their O level term and he held meetings of different age groups for the expression of grievances and suggestions. But for all of this accessibility, Rae retained his aloofness. Even when he was trying to seem informal, he appeared remote; he wanted to be among the pupils, but he did not want to let down his guard; he wanted an escape from the hardships of his study, yet he did not want to reduce pupils' respect for his position.

Also, for all the lip-service Rae paid to his miniature school councils, he was privately very sceptical about them. This is not to say that Rae did not listen to his pupils, he just did so on a more individualized basis. He gauged the school's potential reaction to his policies, say, by playing out scenarios to the school captain. In fact, there were times when Rae listened more to his senior pupils than his staff.

Rae knew that his leadership relied on courting *every* constituency at Westminster, and that especially included his staff. Sadly for Rae, many of his teachers were predisposed to be sceptical about any Head. He likened these rebellious staff to 'medieval barons'. Rae was not Headmaster, but 'Head Master', the nomenclature a reminder to Westminster's leader that they were *primus inter pares*, and that any of the other masters could do the job just as well, or better, had they the energy and inclination.

Some staff liked to view themselves as tenured dons, immune to the whims of management. Others appointed themselves guardians of Westminster's values and launched guerilla attacks whenever they considered these values to be under threat. When Rae abolished the 'seventh form', traditionally the preserve of the Classics masters, these masters openly attacked him for being a 'barbarian' and a 'philistine', putting the market and exam results ahead of 'true' education.

There were times when Rae took risky unilateral decisions. For example, he did not allow his common room to vote on whether the BBC cameras would be allowed into their classrooms. Rae was unsure how many opponents there were, noting that they were '*probably* in a minority', and he played them down to the governors as 'a few dissenting voices'.

When his heads of department resisted the abolition of the Westminster entrance exam, Rae resolved to abolish it 'whether they like it or not'. Rae had a bias for action. Although he saw the need for collegiality, Rae would not allow staff meetings to be forums for the making of decisions: they were opportunities for debate and controlled outlets for frustration.

Even at these meetings, Rae could assert his authority to stem the tide of criticism. When the common room met to discuss the problem of poor discipline, one senior teacher

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said he had given up imposing discipline because the school no longer cared about it. Rae's public rejoinder was that, if this was the case, the master should give up being a teacher.

Rae employed various similes and metaphors to explain the position of the Headmaster. He was like a guerilla leader, he said, because his pupils were not ready to take a formal part in government, and his teachers did not like recognising a 'formal chain of command'. He therefore relied on the personal qualities of a demagogue rather than formal administrative structures. Rae likened Heads to revolutionary leaders, captains of ships, generals, or football managers, because 'it was his plan they were all working to and it was his head on the block if things went wrong'.

A Head was also like a film director, Rae concurred with Francois Truffaut, because 'he is the only one with the whole thing in his mind ... His vision of what the film is to become is the one unifying force': the Head is 'the only one who can see how the pieces fit together'. To extend the simile, Rae's Westminster film was a box-office hit, despite its incoherence to some viewers.

It is not surprising, though, that Rae's attitude towards his staff presented another paradox. On the one hand, Rae wished to follow the maxim 'appoint the best and leave them alone'. This style of leadership can empower staff with entrepreneurial freedom and the desire to please; it can give them the shot of confidence that their leader trusts them to produce results.

But Rae was not temperamentally suited to 'leaving them alone'. He was not necessarily checking up on them, he just liked walking around his school – but this was not always how it was perceived. Rae's head of Classics took to teaching with his chair backed up against the door, to prevent any curious intrusion. 'Management By Wandering About' should be an effective way of leading, keeping the lines of communication open, but it seems that Rae was not sufficiently good at explaining why he was wandering around, leading in some cases to an atmosphere of suspicion and resentment.

In terms of firing bad teachers, Rae's realism meant there was some discrepancy between his talk and his actions. For a Head to survive, Rae argued, they 'cannot afford to be too forgiving', and he described getting rid of poor teachers as his 'first, second and third duty'. But Rae sometimes found it difficult to 'walk the talk'. The situational nature of his leadership ensured he could not risk turning the common room against him by ruthlessly firing beloved old-timers, the residual affection for whom was inversely proportionate to their competency in the classroom.

Rae admitted, 'much as you would like to kill them with your bare hands, you have to spend time and energy on the more subtle business of outmanoeuvring them'. The net result was that Rae had to ease out the 'dry bones' slowly, enticing them to resign with offers of decent pensions. In the meantime, the poor teaching continued and, with one or two exceptions, the time-servers remained with interest in little beyond carping from the corner of the common room about their narcissistic, market-obsessed Head.

Rae had an in-group who were rewarded for their loyalty to his vision, and an out-group who had not yet been tempted into the fold by those rewards. The groups were defined by the quality of their members' teaching. If Rae's teachers were good, he was personally warm towards them. Conversely, Rae

demonstrated disapproval of those who taught poorly by being cold in his manner towards them. This was a characteristically risky strategy and one that could only work for so long.

The formation of a governing clique leads to the alienation of those excluded who do not feel significant and who resist the changes desired by that clique. Rae borrowed the Duke of Wellington's term 'croakers' for those who complained about every decision he made. Rae was content to let these 'croakers' complain among themselves, so long as it did not turn to alliances and machinations against him. The problem was that Rae had frozen them out, and the 'croakers' looked to an alternative Head for future preferment.

In the final years of Rae's Headship, the 'croakers' smelled blood. Rae's wife had published a potentially embarrassing account of the behaviour at the schools in which the Raes had resided. Meanwhile, Rae openly opposed the Assisted Places Scheme, while his governing body supported it.

This was the time for the 'croakers' to strike. They used public meetings to embarrass Rae, asking him questions that they knew would place him on the defensive. They mobilized the common room in support of the abolition of Saturday morning school, knowing that Rae and the governors were against abolition.

Rae's response was to sublimate his inner autocrat and be even-handed. His croaker-driven dithering gave oxygen to the abolitionists, while suggesting to Rae's supporters that they did not have the full support of their Head. Rae allowed the issue to drag on for two terms, before declaring that Saturday morning school was going to stay. But the 'croakers' had done the damage – enticing Rae into a conciliatory position that made him look indecisive, slow-moving and disloyal to his own loyal lieutenants.

The Saturday morning school issue illustrated the difficult scenario in which Rae's leadership and authority was constructed. One of the central problems was that Rae did not have sufficient confidence to antagonise old boys, current pupils, parents and colleagues by firing more teachers who were much loved but whose teaching left much to be desired. Leaving them to fester in the common room, giving them the cold shoulder, and only repudiating their vision of education implicitly, encouraged them to bide their time until they spotted weakness.

Even someone as externally poised and confident as Rae would display chinks in their armour after a decade and a half in charge, and as pressures such as the Assisted Places Scheme made his position increasingly untenable. The minute that it seemed Rae was not in control was the minute he had to start looking for another job. The irony here is clear: Rae was constantly accused of being a cynic, an opportunist, and a trimmer, but it was his clear and public commitment to an educational principle that led to his downfall.

The explanation, too, is simple: Rae knew that his headship had run its natural course; it was better to go because of a clash of principle, than because he had run out of steam or because it seemed he had been forced out by the 'croakers' over the issue of Saturday morning school.

Matthew Jenkinson is Director of Studies at New College School, Oxford.

Making the leap from good to excellent

A prize-winning senior leadership team explains

We have had plenty to celebrate recently at Sheffield High School. In 2013, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) graded the school as 'excellent' and praised our senior leadership team for its strong vision. It is this vision that was the driving force behind an ambitious five-year plan to raise standards, culminating in Sheffield High School clinching first place in the 'outstanding leadership team' category of the Independent School Awards 2013.

When we think back to 2008, we see a successful and well-run school. Our ISI rating was 'good' and Sheffield High School was popular with parents. The pupils were achieving well, and our academic credentials and co-curricular programmes were strong. There was, however, a growing realisation that we could be doing even better than this. 'Good' was not good enough when the school had the potential and the capacity to be truly outstanding.

Making the leap from good to excellent can be a formidable challenge for a school. Our staff, pupils and parents have all been instrumental in taking our school from strength to strength, and the impact has been felt not only within the school gates but in the wider community as well.

There is always room for even the most experienced leaders to learn more and find new ways to inspire colleagues, staff and managers. We were thrilled that our senior leadership team had been recognised for their achievements with an award, and we believe that an early focus on leadership can set the foundations for success in an improving school. Good leadership is essential at all levels of a successful organisation, and this is the philosophy behind our Emerging Leaders course which aims to nurture our school's middle leaders and aspiring leaders. Last year, 25 members of staff, from NQTs through to the most senior managers, took part in the course, in which everyone learned from each other.

Along with many schools, we have a skilled team of teachers and we realised that we could pool our expertise and take our teaching to the next level. To this end, we focus all our training on sharing best practice through learning logs and peer observations.

We would describe what we have in our school as an open door culture where every teacher gives and receives advice. Our ultimate goal is for all our teachers to participate in the leadership course. This way we hope to increase understanding of the role each individual has to play in raising standards at the school. By showing our teachers what outstanding practice in the classroom looks like, we can exchange ideas and support one another as we strive to deliver the highest quality teaching at all times.

Preparation for leadership need not be restricted to staff members. Empowering pupils to lead not only equips them for the future; it encourages them to take responsibility for



Val Dunsford

themselves and their school. There are many opportunities for schools to encourage their pupils to assume leadership roles, for example in sport, environmental responsibility and academic development. By giving pupils a voice, a school can gain clearer insight into the areas it could be improving too.

We are seeing the benefit of this ourselves as all of our Year 12s follow a course which is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management – a practical, worthwhile activity which complements their academic study. The girls also run a teaching and learning council, through which teachers share ideas and experiment with concepts before taking them into the classroom. By involving the pupils at this level, we benefit from their views on how standards of teaching and learning can be raised.

At Sheffield High, we are firm believers in the value of exchanging ideas, and schools have much to gain by offering one another the wisdom of their knowledge and experience. As members of the Girls' Day School Trust we are part of a larger alliance of schools. We have also formed links with state maintained schools in the area. Our teaching staff spend time in other schools and teachers visit ours to share examples of outstanding practice.

Less formal but equally valuable opportunities can also help teachers to gain perspective in their lesson planning. One technique we have adopted is the 'learning walk'. This is a short lesson drop-in that is often paired, promoting reflective dialogue between teachers and providing a fascinating snapshot into effective teaching practice. Schools have so many innovative and exciting approaches in the classroom and likewise, they can learn from others to enrich their own teaching.

We have found that to drive progress in school, it is crucial to take stock of how the pupils are performing across the curriculum. This was the first step we took in raising attainment. Our approach to the collection and analysis of pupils' achievement data had previously been rather *ad hoc*, with pockets of good practice but little in the way of standardisation. Part of our strategic plan involved developing a new system of tracking progress using the data in our SIMS management information system, which made it easier for all departments to get involved.

This gives us a cross-curricular view so that we can see at a glance how well a pupil is doing in each subject and whether

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Nina Gunson and girls.



Sheffield High School.

or not she is achieving her targets. By doing this we are able to identify patterns, and if we detect a worrying trend in which a pupil appears to be stagnating or falling behind, we are able to engage the head of year or pastoral staff to find out if there is a reason for this, such as gaps in the girl's understanding of a particular topic, or a problem at home. We can then provide the appropriate support.

A pupil's progress at school can be affected by a range of influences and it can be difficult to keep track of these without a proper system in place. We found that by training our staff in the use and understanding of data, we are able to use it more systematically in our half termly meetings. Now we make sure that data forms the basis of conversations about test grades and homework marks. Information is no longer just filed away. It informs decisions about maths teaching in Year 9, for example, or target setting in Year 11. Closer and more regular tracking of progress also means that we can alert tutors, parents and pupils to any issues early, rather than waiting until reports come out or examinations are taken.

Even the most able pupil can underperform if, for whatever

reason, they are not fully engaged with their studies. One of the drawbacks of our previous system was that our pupils' effort grades did not tell us enough about why they were performing well or achieving below expectation. So we re-wrote them. We looked at aspects such as attitude

to learning, organisation skills and the impact of a pupils' conduct on their classmates.

This gives us a more holistic view of our pupils and enables us to engage our pastoral teams in building pupils' confidence and increasing their motivation to succeed. With a clearer picture of effort and achievement across the board, tutors are able to have conversations with the pupils about their targets in all of their subjects, and the curriculum and pastoral teams work together to raise attainment.

We are thrilled that the journey we have taken to become an outstanding school is having such a positive impact on pupils' performance. In 2013 the number of A* grades achieved at A level increased by 5% from the previous year, and 53% of pupils gained A* or A grades. The whole school ethos is about aiming high and achieving more, and we are looking forward to building on this in the coming years.

Nina Gunson is deputy head at Sheffield High School (GDST) and Valerie Dunsford has been Head of the school since 2004.

Data: key to a successful school?

Even the most successful schools need good data to remain at the top, says Charles Fillingham

The reasons why parents choose to educate their children privately are as numerous as the parents themselves. Individual attention to their child's progress, small classes, high academic expectations, quality pastoral support, superb sporting or music facilities, extensive extra-curricular programmes ... the list goes on. However, it's my belief that there is one overriding expectation that these parents have, no matter which school they select: the expectation of excellence.

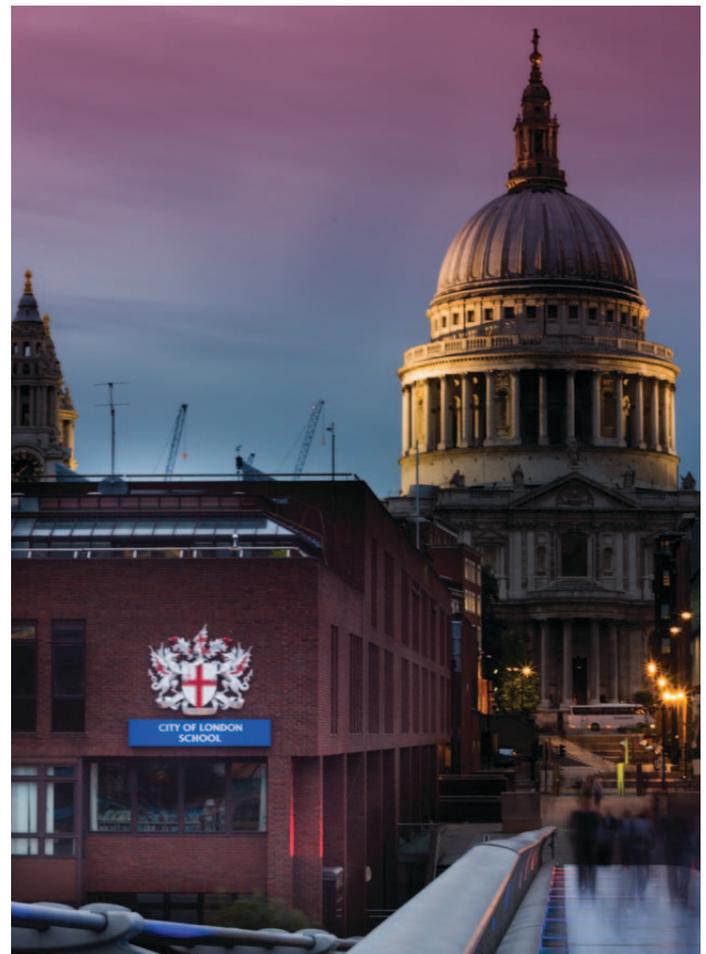
Excellence is what we strive to deliver on a day-to-day basis at the City of London School. We wouldn't be able to do that without the ability to make the right decisions on the education we offer, at the right time, which ultimately benefit pupils, staff and parents, while remaining true to the traditions and ethos of our school. Like many high-performing schools, we're increasingly finding that having accurate pupil data to hand is a very good starting point for making informed decisions across the school. Our use of technology supports this.

In the past it would have been easy for the Headmaster and leadership team to be removed from how important a school database had become for many schools. This can no longer be the case. Advances in technology mean that the management of pupil and school data has moved beyond the domain of the IT department.

These days recording data, such as the details of pupils' attendance and achievement, can be as simple as marking an electronic register or test grade in class with just a couple of clicks of the mouse. Senior staff, heads of year and teachers across the school can get access to this information quickly and easily – even beyond the confines of the classroom via an iPad or similar mobile device. This can bring substantial and lasting benefits to a school.

The 920 boys who come from all over London to attend our school, for example, have an average travel time of about 45 minutes. There are many circumstances that can influence their punctuality, a virtue we do much to instill.

Keeping track of who is turning up when and understanding what it is that might be preventing a prompt start to the school day would be very difficult without teachers being able to log their pupils' attendance directly and immediately into our computer system, the management information system supplied by SIMS Independent. Taking attendance electronically makes it easier for us to spot patterns and speak to the boys in the first instance if there is an issue, or escalate the conversation to their parents if it continues.



City of London School.

Successful schools have well thought out aims and take considerable pride in achieving them. At the City of London School, our objective is to provide a community in which boys attain the highest academic standards and are able to demonstrate their ability to think critically and creatively. Despite the naturally high ability of many of our pupils, we are under no illusions that these goals will fulfill themselves. A broad curriculum needs to be organised, with timetabled lessons carefully planned, in a purposeful and productive way that makes the most of the staff and facilities we have available to us. Using timetabling software saves substantial time in making this a reality.

Similarly, when pupil information is held centrally, a school leader is in control of the facts, and can work with the staffing team to tackle underperformance and provide extra support where it is required. I expect many teachers would agree that it can often be quite clear who the highest and lowest achievers are, but more difficult to identify those in the middle who are coasting or stalling, and who could be doing better with the appropriate support.

There is no substitute for really getting to know each individual pupil, but looking at the data available on a child can help support teachers' intuition and add a further layer of insight into what action can be taken to encourage greater progress.

Parents naturally want their child to be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential and, quite rightly, they expect to see evidence that this is happening. We send home an indication of each child's progress at the end of every half term – a process parents appreciate and find informative.

Continued overleaf →

What kind of school is this?



Charles
Fillingham

This is part of our communication strategy with parents and it's something we take very seriously. After all, parents are extremely important in supporting our pupils' progress – and there's no more powerful marketing tool when it comes to attracting new pupils. It has long been accepted that children make the best progress when the school, parent and pupil work together, so engaging parents fully in school life is central to success.

Communicating proactively with parents is always well-received, if done in a timely fashion. We have traditionally shared information with parents by letter. However, on one occasion when the school bus was late, one of our parents quipped, "I suppose you are going to send a letter out to us about this".

The incident prompted us to survey parents to find out how they would like us to communicate with them. Like many schools, we had assumed they wanted us to write to them in a formal letter. However, the survey revealed that almost unanimously they preferred email, so that is what we now do.

We will also send text messages when communications need to be more immediate. By storing pupil data centrally,

we have found that disseminating information across the school and to parents is a much simpler undertaking.

It is well worth investing some time in investigating which management information system will best suit the needs of your school. For example, our school is owned by the City of London Corporation. When we wanted to update our financial management system, we needed something that could handle our unique requirements, including some complex processes relating to the invoicing and administration of fees.

We wanted to ensure the school's financial data could link back to the Corporation's IT system and update that efficiently. It was quite a big ask, but the system we chose is flexible and sophisticated enough to handle all our requirements and more, saving staff considerable time. We manage £12 million of revenue from fees and can send out almost 1000 termly invoices in a day.

While data management may be regarded as something that goes on behind the scenes, the right system can in fact underpin the unique traditions, heritage and culture of a school. It can help demonstrate the value of the education being provided and facilitate open and honest relationships with parents in the joint quest to produce well-rounded, well-qualified and confident young adults.

To my mind, the need for accurate and up-to-date information is critical to the smooth running of a school and should be embraced. When managed well, the data being recorded every day can become the backbone of an efficient, thriving and successful school.

Charles Fillingham is assistant headmaster of the City of London School and is a member of the school's modern languages department.

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.

Twining toilets targets typhoid

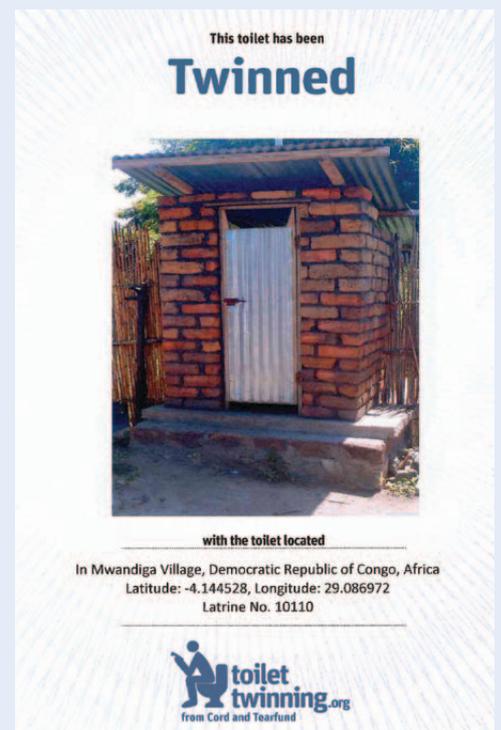
As part of an extensive renovation project at Oundle's Stahl Theatre, a disabled lavatory is a welcome addition to the facilities offered in the foyer.

Donations from Stahl staff have enabled the twinning of a toilet at the Theatre with one in Mwandiga village in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Toilet Twinning enables the raising of funds for founder charities Cord and Tearfund, to enable people living in poor communities to have clean water, a decent toilet and to learn about hygiene – a vital combination that prevents the spread of disease, reduces the number of deaths among children and brings hope for the future.

For a £60 donation, you can twin your toilet at home, work, school or church with a latrine through the link: www.toilettwinning.org/ More twinned toilets are, so to speak, in the pipeline at Oundle.

Equal access has been at the forefront of these developments, whilst the theatre bar has been reconfigured and the floor of the auditorium has been upgraded and re-carpeted and the walls repainted.

Ali Boag, director of The Stahl, says, "We are delighted that we can now offer equal access to the theatre. Over the past few years, we have made it possible for patrons and visitors in wheelchairs to get into the building with ease and we have also installed a hearing loop for use when Oundle Cinema is showing films. The new lavatory completes this round of improvements."





Dare to be different

The importance of differentiation in an independent school

It was Coco Chanel who once said, “In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different.” Never has this been truer than within the independent school sector, where parents and pupils nowadays have a lot of genuine options. For the staff in a school who may have been there for many years and therefore experienced the ethos first-hand over a protracted period, it might be ‘obvious’ as to what is different or unique about the school; but the external audience may see things differently and may take a lot more convincing as to why your school is compellingly different and worth all the years of fees.

I well remember being asked at interview for a school marketing position, crucially after my tour, what I felt made the school different. Before I had a chance to answer, I was told that it was, of course, the delightful children. Of that there was no doubt and whilst individual schools nurture subtly different atmospheres, my experience has taught me that all children, given the right environment, are delightful, particularly when ‘on show’! Small class sizes, a friendly atmosphere wonderful facilities *etc* is, quite simply, no longer enough. These qualities should be taken as read.

Loretto School, just outside Edinburgh, is something of a pioneer when it comes to differentiation. Its Golf Academy,

the first of its kind, has cut a clear niche. Golf is as integral a part of Scotland today as it was back in the 15th century when the game of ‘gowf’, as it was known in those days, was banned by Parliament under King James II as a distraction from military training. Fortunately the ban was lifted when the Treaty of Glasgow came into effect in 1502 and the game has gone from strength to strength ever since.

Scotland is the birthplace of modern golf and Loretto School, perhaps because of its superb location next to the world’s oldest playing course, has a strong tradition of top level golf, dating back to its founding in 1827. The school has a long and distinguished history in UK educational excellence and is Scotland’s oldest extant boarding school.

It occupies 85 acres to the east of Scotland’s capital city and is a gateway to some of the world’s finest links courses in the area of East Lothian known as ‘Scotland’s Golf Coast’. The fact that the school is situated next to the world’s oldest course, Musselburgh Links, where records show golf has been played since 1672, made the foundation of a Golf Academy an obvious step to take.

Over the years former pupils of Loretto have captained many of the best known clubs in the UK: seven captains of

What kind of school is this?

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St Andrews; 11 of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, the world's oldest golf club; and ten at Prestwick. It is small wonder then that Loretto boasts its own highly successful Golf Academy which celebrates its 12th anniversary in 2014.

From a humble beginning of six golfers in 2002, to a current capacity of 50 young golfers, places in Loretto's Golf Academy are keenly prized. The Loretto Golf Academy attracts boy and girls aged ten to 18 from all over the world and offers them an outstanding opportunity to develop their golfing talents in tandem with a first class education. The school boasts its own on-campus practice facilities with a Huxley nine hole artificial putting green, driving bays and bunker and chipping areas.

There are also remarkable indoor facilities offering innovative practice programmes for both beginners and advanced. There are plans afoot for a state-of-the-art indoor golf centre which will take the golf programme to new levels, (and perhaps answer critics who woefully mention the dark winter evenings and wet weather associated with Scotland!).

Working closely with the Scottish Golf Union and in partnership with Championship courses at Craighielaw and Archerfield, the Loretto Golf Academy has ensured that it remains at the cutting edge of schools' golf. It has continued to develop an unrivalled programme of golf for aspiring golfers including one-to-one tutoring sessions, professional coaching in strength and conditioning using the Golf BioDynamics system, short game and sport psychology.

The goal for many Loretto golfers is to attend an American University when they leave. Loretto has worked closely with ProdreamUSA since 2005 to ensure their players get the best possible advice during this important transition.

Our ultimate aim is to produce an Open winner. However, most golfers do not reach their peak until they are in their 30s, so Loretto's day is yet to come!

Jonathan Hewat is director of external affairs at Loretto School.



Loretto golfers.



The cost-control crusade

Edward Valletta joins the battle on spending in a decentralised community

The struggle to control costs in a decentralised community is something of a never-ending problem for many independent schools in the UK. Whatever age group you're educating, the issues faced by most schools today are the same. Whether it's related to campus culture, decentralisation, community and communication, minimising waste or, possibly the biggest headache of all, the battle to control costs, everyone is in the same proverbial 'boat'. But as the future financial climate continues to work against independent schools through increased supplier costs exacerbated by added pressure on fee income, regaining control of spend becomes vital for all.

The flip side for the independent education sector is that the stakeholders (*ie* parents of pupils) face the full force of the difficult financial environment. Lose a pupil at the beginning of the middle school, and that revenue is both difficult to replace and a considerable loss because of the sustainability through the GCSE/AS/A2 process.

Legacy IT systems and processes have not helped bursars to keep one step ahead of the supply chain either. This is partly due to outdated technology and resource-hungry systems but also because it's easier to stick in your comfort zone or ignore advances in technology (which frankly are a little scary and usually mean making changes of which nobody is a great fan), but that does mean that the same mistakes are being made day in day out, pushing bursars further away from their objective to regain control of costs.

As bursars, we struggle to manage school budgets because we don't really manage them – others do. Take the many people responsible for ordering school stationery as an example. They could quite happily blow the entire school stationery budget if they are not controlled properly, both



Edward Valletta

from amount expended and potential choice of multiple suppliers.

Whether it is teachers or estates personnel, the list goes on and, if we're honest, we have no real control over when the agreed budget is spent or indeed who it's spent with. Couple that with a lack of real spending power when it comes to negotiating prices and archaic technology which is no longer up to the job, and you can see why managing budgets is not straightforward.

For most schools, the internal community spends school money in an unintentional but haphazard manner and whether we want to admit it or not, the truth is many bursars have effectively lost a level of control financially.

But, if all independent schools share common ground when it comes to controlling costs, why do they work in isolation of each other? Unlike commercial businesses, which are fiercely competitive and wary of giving the opposition any kind of helping hand or advantage over themselves, the independent education sector is actually sitting on the same side of the fence – and they all face the same demon, controlling spend.

But can a common scenario like this lead to welcome



Kimbolton Castle.

What kind of school is this?



Kimbolton staircase.

change in the education sector in creating a more unified way of tackling a widespread problem? As the bursar of an independent school, I've spent a great deal of my time trying to manage costs more effectively and I believe it's time for a change and a new way of doing things which helps to share that burden and save money at the same time.

What I've started to realise is that if we somehow joined every school's collective purchasing together, which amounts to a significant sum, the result could be quite powerful when it comes to driving down supplier costs and reducing our overheads. Standing together as one united front would put the power and control back into the hands of bursars and their schools because everyone would benefit from purchasing together making it harder for suppliers to make unreasonable price hikes.

Individually, schools spend millions of pounds every year and, for the most part, like to support their local communities, so schools should also have the choice to use local suppliers and continue to help the local business community, or choose a national supplier if they so wish. Having the correct information to make an informed choice on who to buy from would go some way to alleviating the issue of 'price creep'.

What does this mean? It simply means that the education industry has the capability to collaborate when it comes to dealing with external suppliers by creating one powerful united front that will help to drive down costs of goods and force suppliers to be more competitive on price.

I have just been appointed chairman of the new collaborative school initiative, The Facilities Collective, and as part of this role I'm working alongside many other independent schools in a bid to reduce overhead and control costs. As a community

we all appreciate the need to keep on top of school spending and as Richard Metcalfe, bursar at RGS Newcastle, said to me just the other day: "Collective purchasing is very much a step into the future of cost control and online business management for schools; we all need to be part of the innovative, new movement." I couldn't agree more.

But as with all new initiatives in independent education, this new paradigm in collective purchasing and overheads control will take time to build. But with a gradual and well-informed change in mind-set, educational establishments and their bursars can start to work together in the battle to control costs and simultaneously benefit from the experience.

The power of joining every school's collective purchasing online will mean that all schools, regardless of size, geography, denomination or style, can benefit from purchasing together. But at present, the battle to control costs and avoid overspend remains. How long that will continue, however, remains to be seen.

Edward Valletta is Bursar at Kimbolton School. and chairman of The Facilities Collective.

About The Facilities Collective (www.facilitiescollective.com)

The Facilities Collective Ltd is an operating division of Caternet Ltd. Before the system launched officially in March 2014, up to 20 founding partners (Oundle School, Kimbolton School, Harrow School, Portsmouth Grammar School, Millfield, Wellingborough, Edge Grove, Box Hill and Milton Abbey currently), will cover the UK in small regional groups.

These schools will help model the software that Caternet is currently developing. Coupled with a professional purchasing management team, collective members are expected to sustainably reduce their current facilities spend by at least 15/20%.

The internet highway code

How Bede's is leading the way in e-safety

A recently-published survey by the Pew Research Centre, education and training consultants, identified that almost 50% of teenagers now own smartphones, up from just 23% in 2011, and that 95% of UK teens use the internet at least weekly. This exposure to technology is often either taken for granted or sensationalised when things go wrong, but what can schools do to help pupils navigate this new digital ecosystem safely?

In an effort to stay ahead of the curve, Bede's in East Sussex saw students and staff embarking on a comprehensive e-safety review programme in 2009, spearheaded by the school's head of e-safety, Michael Krause. This scheme culminated in June 2013, when South West Grid for Learning awarded Bede's the '360 degree safe' E-Safety Mark, making it the first independent school in the country to be given this gold standard in e-safety provision. This award has subsequently seen other leading schools looking at Bede's model and using it as a basis for their own e-safety programmes.

Bede's endeavours in the field set it apart from many educational establishments, independent or otherwise, and started with an acknowledgement that parents and staff had a duty to understand the makeup of the online world for, as Michael Krause explains, this is where the students of today are spending a considerable amount of time.

"We knew that we had to be wholly honest with our students and promote the benefits of technology use on a daily basis, whilst at the same time raising awareness of the pitfalls." He said. "We realised that whether we ourselves use the

technology or not, these technologies are here to stay and will continue to play a major part in the wider lives of this generation of young people for years to come – hence our forthright approach."

One of the cornerstones of Bede's initiative was to use students to drive the scheme, finding ways for peers to help one another to understand how their actions online could not only have an impact on the present day but on future employers and universities too.

"Understanding the intricate ins and outs of Snap Chat or Ask.fm can seem quite daunting for teachers. However, a basic understanding of these technologies may be the key to starting a conversation with a student that might have proved difficult in the past and may even provide substantial benefits as to how a particular teacher plans lessons."

Aside from the actively encouraged use of technology by teachers, including the use of e-conferencing, Google documents, Twitter and Instagram, Bede's also developed its own bespoke parent portal in 2011 which contains several useful and regularly updated parents' guides to these technologies, written in part by students, along with Bede's own Digital Parenting publication. Even so, these efforts are only the tip of the iceberg.

"Whilst we are naturally proud of being the first independent school in the country to be awarded the 360 E-Safety Mark, the measures it assessed us on cover only a few of the many steps we are taking to ensure that awareness and safe



*Bede's Headmaster,
Richard Maloney,
and pupils.*

What kind of school is this?



*Navigating
the internet
highway code.*

online practices are fully understood and embraced by the school community. The challenge now is to build upon this foundation to ensure that these messages are embedded in everyday life.”

Initiatives like Bede’s student-led Safer Internet Days and the training of student ambassadors to deliver crucial messages through the school’s house system are more recent introductions to the programme, with the continuing focus not placed on the individual aspects of e-safety, such as technological solutions, but instead on integrating e-safety into school policies and the curriculum, challenging teachers and leaders in the school to think about their provision and its continual evolution.

Bede’s Headmaster, Dr Richard Maloney, who instigated the scheme shortly after joining the school, said of the work undertaken by students and staff: “Successful schools are expected to show that they have provided a high standard of e-safety education. Living in a fast-paced, digital world, where technology is an integral part of our students’ lives, comes with an inherent responsibility for us as a school. Our award not only reinforces our policies and procedures but, more importantly, highlights our on-going commitment to safeguarding, educating and keeping our students safe.”

Innovative response to challenge is very much in the Bede’s DNA. Founded in 1978 by Peter Pyemont, the extraordinarily enterprising Head of St Bede’s Preparatory School in Eastbourne, it made its first appearance in an advertisement in the Times Educational Supplement in the words ‘Wanted Headmaster to Start New School’.

The successful candidate was Roger Perrin whose entertaining book Why does anyone want to go to your school? gives an account of its journey from a converted garage to The Dicker, the former home of the demagogue Horatio Bottomley. Numbers rose from 23 to over 600 under Roger Perrin’s leadership and much of the original estate of The Dicker was restored, whilst new buildings of all sorts provided for the steadily rising pupil roll.

In this, as the author points out, the school was following the example of Millfield, where expansion and enterprise was never held back by conventional thinking. Peter Pyemont deserves to be compared with ‘Boss’ Meyer and to take his place alongside that other founder of Sussex schools, the prolific Nathaniel Woodard. Another influence was Joc Lynam of the Dragon School, where Roger Perrin taught and imbibed a heady culture of fun, hard work, common sense and respect for others.

But the key to this book is the answer to the question posed in the title by Anthony Seldon, because that is the question for all Heads and governors: ‘Why does anyone want to go to your school?’ The answer given by Roger Perrin in 1999 was ‘because we looked after the students. We looked after them with a real intensity and in their interests and not those of “the school”, or to fit to a pattern laid down by government, or indeed any part of the educational establishment.’ How would you answer the question?

Why does anyone want to go to your school? by Roger Perrin. Lennard Publishing 2013 ISBN 978-1-85291-154-6.

Access denied

And that would be because...?

We've all had it, haven't we? You spend time at home preparing a lesson with some wonderful video or other exciting interactive content from the wonders of the world wide web, it all works fine and then you fire it up the next day in front of your class and are faced with something like the picture accompanying this article.

Here we go again – time for another seat of the pants impromptu discussion on something current, or a few uninspiring questions from the textbook as we haven't really got a plan B (yes, we know that we should). We kick ourselves, curse the boys in IT, and vow never to trust the school network again. Until the next time.

At least we can console ourselves that it's all for a good reason, though. We can sleep safe in the knowledge that the filtering has meant our innocent little charges have not been unwittingly exposed to some of the nasties of the net. But deep down, we know the truth – school-based internet filtering doesn't actually achieve this noble aim. The majority of older pupils have full unbridled access on their smartphones anyway and it won't be long before this filters down to younger ones as well.

So how did we end up in this scenario, where legitimate use by staff is overly restricted, whilst the kids can merrily access whatever new incarnations of dodginess they desire? Well, as with most things, we're behind the curve here. Restrictive IT policies made sense in the days when the only access to the internet that pupils had was via the school computer room.

It did serve a purpose of protection in that environment and was a sensible precaution to take. But we can't ignore the fact that times have changed and the genie is now well and truly out of the bottle. If we no longer control the supply of internet access, there is little point restricting it.

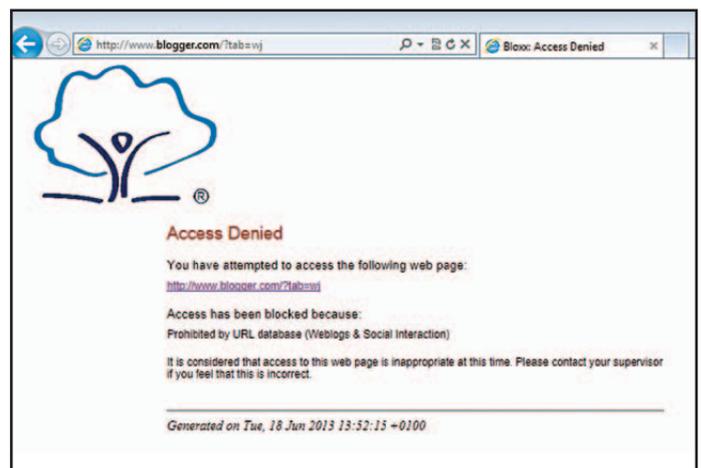
But this isn't what our IT departments recommend and surely we should trust their advice, shouldn't we? To a degree, yes. For example, there are good network security reasons for controlling what can be downloaded to prevent malicious hacking of the school system, but these safeguards should not be the excuse for taking a sledgehammer to crack the net nut.

It's worth asking whether IT are the right people to determine the correct balance between network risk and educational benefit, as they will always err towards the former. After all, it's their mess to clean up when it goes wrong, and they don't see the benefits of the use in the classroom. As an example, let me ask you this – are your IT department usually open to progress with new platforms and exciting new ways of using technology? Or are they often the ones that are putting up the barriers? "Apple's no good as it doesn't talk to other systems. Android's no good as it's far too open and vulnerable." Right, so that's ruled out 90% of the world's smartphones then...

What's the way forward then? It's easy to criticise, and I'm certainly not saying we shouldn't worry about the dangers of free internet access. However, I do think that the majority of schools have got the emphasis wrong. As we can no



John Weiner



longer control the access, our response must be to refocus on education as the best way of protecting our pupils and trust that they make the right decisions, alongside sensible monitoring to reveal misuse of school systems.

Continuing to pretend that we can resolve this in any other way misses the point and is doomed to failure. More time spent on getting pupils to understand the good and bad of the net is time well spent. You may think you do this already – but ask your students how many of them have changed their default Facebook settings from open access. I'll bet that most haven't, so clearly we have some way to go to get the message across effectively.

In the context of educating pupils, some filtering is of course still justified – laws exist on age-restricted material which the school can and should protect against. But let's try to approach this situation by allowing access unless there's a reason to filter, rather than filtering unless there is a reason to unblock.

So what about the kid who gets it wrong and accesses something they shouldn't via the school network? Instead of seeing this as a problem, couldn't it be argued that it is

What kind of school is this?

an educational opportunity? Wouldn't it be better to get it wrong in a monitored system and learn the lesson in a school environment rather than find out the hard way in the workplace in a few years' time? I'm pretty sure that employers won't be as forgiving as schools are and, in the long run, erring pupils may even be thankful that they got caught and warned off at school.

You could put this in the jargon of asking what the educational objective is here. Something along the lines of getting our pupils to understand the massive benefits of the internet whilst learning how to stay safe online? Limiting the benefits by over-filtering reduces the 'pull' effect and kids don't want to use the school wifi, for example, as they can't

check their Twitter. Therefore they use their own connection and by-pass the 'good' filtering. Objective not achieved. At least if they're in the system, we can engage with them on some level.

So, let's take a step back and revisit our default views and our default settings. Who knows, one day they might even let me edit my blog from school but currently Blogger is filtered!

John Weiner is currently head of economics and business studies at Caterham School. He has taught in independent schools for 11 years in a variety of leadership, academic and pastoral roles, and previously worked in the city. He also authors The SMT Spy, a blog on leadership in schools. (smtspy.blogspot.co.uk).

HERE & THERE

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Ely scheme hits the heights

Braving sub-zero temperatures and blustery snow storms, ten courageous King's Ely students climbed to the top of Mulhacen, the tallest peak in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Spain. The winter training expedition took place over three days, with the young climbers facing temperatures as low as -12°C and an ascent of around 3,500 metres.

Their adventure was facilitated by the King's Ely Scheme – a unique programme that aims to build skills that cannot necessarily be taught in the classroom, allowing students to push themselves beyond what they ever thought possible.

Nick Nicholas, director of Ely Scheme, commented: "The expedition to the Sierra Nevada Mountains was part of an ongoing programme to teach the students how to survive in these harsh conditions. Everyone involved coped extremely well and the spectacular views upon reaching the summit made the whole experience even more rewarding.

"Having already scaled the French and Italian Alps, their final expedition lies in Outer Mongolia, with a climb up Mount Kuiten, thought to be the most remote mountain in the world."



The school on everyone's lips

Is it yours?

However good your marketing team, there is always a bit of a sinking feeling when you open a magazine or newspaper and find that the school you deem to be a near competitor is featured in a two-page spread with pictures. Why did the journalist not call us instead, you think. We have a better story to tell than they do.

So why is it that the school down the road is able to get themselves featured in all the right places, whereas your good news is only occasionally picked up?

One of the core reasons might simply be that your marketing team needs to be thinking more like journalists. Very early on in their careers, hacks develop an inbuilt sense of a story. The fact that your hockey team is having their best season yet may be of interest to the local paper, but no other journalist or blogger sees it as news.

Something needs to be the biggest, the fastest, the first, the last, the oldest, the best, the most intelligent or just plain unusual to warrant anyone other than your local newspaper picking it up. As a PR agency it is our job to find these stories and here are some of the tools we employ to ensure you get in front of the audiences you want to target.

One of the key starting points is to know your audience. You already know whether parents of potential students come from the local region, nationally or internationally. The next step is to find out what internet sites these parents visit, what newspapers or magazines they read and what clubs or events they frequent.

This will ensure you concentrate your PR efforts in the right places. If many parents you are targeting belong to the local golf club, consider running an outreach event at the club. If 10% of your students come from Hong Kong, consider pitching a story to the *South China Morning Post* (a local paper) about how Hong Kong students are thriving in boarding schools in the UK.

If you are setting your sights higher and want to be seen as a thought leader in independent education, as well as just influencing parents to come to your school, then you probably want to be looking at a PR campaign that also targets publications, events and social media that your peers read and frequent.

Do you hold a position on the board of an association? You could offer to speak on a newsworthy topic at association conferences and call the key education journalists on the nationals to introduce yourself or engage with them on Twitter. Let them know you are available for comment on key independent education stories when they break. Journalists are always looking for new contacts with an interesting opinion to add to their books. Just make sure you have been media trained by an expert beforehand.

The next step is to look at what assets you have to create news. Student success stories are a rich source for any



Catherine Lane

school targeting the local press. Build relationships with local journalists. Find out when their deadlines are and then regularly let them know about the achievements of your pupils – a paragraph or two will suffice – accompanied by a good quality photograph.

If your school has a long and illustrious history, you could issue occasional sound bites detailing what was happening 'on this day in 1885'. For the nationals, it is the more unusual stories that will spark their interest, so you should employ the right tactics to get noticed. Do you have a student or group of students who have overcome a particular hardship to gain fantastic GCSE results or a place at Cambridge? Have you noticed a new trend in the way parents choose a school or is a fresh teaching method improving results in maths?

What a journalist wants to write about:

An emerging or changing trend, for instance in pupil numbers or parents' choice of school.

The first to achieve something.

Strong figures, such as a parent survey that links to a newsworthy subject.

A celebrity with links to the school.

A controversial opinion (deploy this technique with care and only after taking advice from a PR professional).

As well as actively creating opportunities, don't forget to react to what's going on in the news, be this Anti-bullying Week, Green Week or the latest PISA scores. YearAhead.com is a good resource for this as it lists PR weeks. A morning dose of the *Today* programme is essential too. Another opportunity is to fill a need. Parents who choose to make an investment in private schooling will be concerned about their child's achievement all through their education cycle.

You can help put your school in the forefront of these parents' minds by offering handouts, or conducting talks on areas that they want information on. If you take children from

What kind of school is this?

13 years old, why not consider offering to speak in front of parents at potential feeder schools locally about how they can help their child with preparation for secondary school.

Other key areas you could provide information on might be improving their child's reading skills, building confidence or increasing their chances of being selected by an Oxbridge institution. The content created can be used for talks, pitched as articles to magazines aimed at parents choosing schools and used as printed guides to be offered to parents via social media when you spot discussions on the subject. This will help promote your school to a wide audience of parents wishing

the best for their child and ensure that your target audience starts to talk about you in exactly the way you want them to.

The final tip is to make sure you set targets for your PR plan and measure your progress against them. This way you will not get blown off course in your ultimate goal of ensuring your school is the one on everyone's lips.

Catherine Lane is the PR director at Catherine Lane PR, a specialist public relations agency for the education sector.

For more ideas for PR coverage visit their blog at www.catherinelane.com.

How technology will help win the exam marking battle

GSA is on the case

Have you ever felt like you were judged unfairly? Now imagine that unfair judgement was represented in a mark which would be publicly broadcast to everyone that counted – potential schools, universities and employers. In fact, your very future rested upon that unfair judgement. Those are the stakes involved when we talk about exam marking – an annual 'scandal' which sees exams officers dealing with a huge volume of remark requests in schools everywhere.

Ofqual is well aware of this problem and has published a lengthy review into the accuracy and quality of exam marking. One of the key points raised is about the increasing dominance of on-screen marking.

A lot of people instinctively think marking online is bad news and will only increase inaccuracies. Indeed early transitions to an online system led to large number of students being issued the wrong grades in some papers and exam boards.

However, I believe in many ways online marking is a better and more reliable system. Every 10 or 20 papers an examiner marks will be seeded – already marked by a senior examiner – meaning that if the examiner marks the seeded paper incorrectly, swift intervention will follow. That can mean close monitoring or a temporary stop to marking for the examiner to receive feedback. If their marking does not improve, they can be permanently stopped from marking and their scripts remarked by another examiner.

The key issue is about how we use technology without being scared of it. One way in which this technology can be of real benefit to students is what is known as 'item-level marking'. This means individual questions or sets of questions on papers can be sent to different markers. This way, examiners who have the relevant expertise can mark the specific areas in which they are experts. It also reduces the effect of examiners being biased by how well a student does on the rest of the paper – so individual marks for each question are more accurate.



Caroline Jordan

We are not there just yet. As I have said publicly before, markers need to be better supported to do their work. That means not having to do their marking late at night at the end of a full day's teaching, having somewhere dedicated to their marking and time off to train.

The Girls' Schools Association, HMC and other schools bodies are providing a small number of schools to be involved in an Ofqual pilot, beginning this summer, which will trial this new way of working. Ultimately, our aim is to bring back professionalism to exam marking.

Caroline Jordan chairs the Girls' Schools Association education committee and is Headmistress of Headington School in Oxford.

Real skills for real life

Eton + plus at The Outward Bound Trust -
a unique and enriching experience



The kayak fleet.

What are the key skills and qualities needed for success in the 21st century? The answer has proved a slippery one amongst educationalists in recent years. In the past, academic achievement was regarded as a given and so fundamental that its predominance has rarely been questioned. But there is a growing feeling, embraced by many leading schools worldwide, that for young people to really shine as they go into the world, they must be able to offer a far more comprehensive set of skills than those defined by exam results.

They must show themselves as mature, resilient people who can adopt a positive and flexible approach to whatever their new context throws at them. In other words, they must learn to think and act creatively.

Eton College recently formed a partnership with Windsor Boys' School to pilot a unique scheme, Eton+plus, aimed at developing just these qualities and its success has been remarkable. In the summer of 2013, 25 boys from Eton and 25 from Windsor Boys', accompanied by masters and teachers, attended a two-week bespoke course with The Outward Bound Trust.

The students undertook the programme during an important period of transition between Years 11 and 12, as they prepared to take on an increasing level of responsibility and independence in their education. The course took place immediately following their GCSEs, at the start of the summer holidays and prior to beginning sixth form. It was delivered at The Trust's Loch Eil centre in the Scottish Highlands, and combined 'skills days' such as rock climbing and abseiling, overnight expeditions and a 'service' day with

indoor reflective and theory-based sessions that focused on both individual and group development.

The Outward Bound Trust has a solid track record in running adventure courses in the wild outdoors; indeed its history dates back to 1941 when the pioneering founder, renowned educationalist Kurt Hahn, set out to help merchant seamen develop essential survival skills like resilience, teamwork and leadership. Since then, The Trust has helped over a million young people from all backgrounds by placing them in challenging, adventurous situations, stretching them to achieve their potential.

Eton College is no stranger to innovative thinking. It offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, as well as the opportunity for its students to get involved in community projects such as helping at local schools, so the concept of 'service' has been built in to its ethos for many years. Equally, Eton is not the first public school to think about incorporating out-of-classroom learning into its curriculum. Leading schools worldwide, such as Wesley College in Australia, The Mountain School in Vermont and St Alban's College in Pretoria offer a range of experiences from running an organic farm to living in the bush without adults.

But Eton wanted to push their own boundaries further and envisaged a customised course that would produce outstanding preparation for students' next stage. Before embarking on this initiative, Eton College engaged in extensive internal and external research. It consulted with masters and students, educational specialists and potential partners and became *au fait* with the latest in education theory in order to determine precisely what would benefit Eton students.

Continued overleaf →

Out and about

The research resulted in broad agreement about which key elements were already being taught at Eton and what needed to be enhanced for effective successful living in the 21st century. While Eton's students were well prepared to thrive in a competitive environment and were seen to strive for excellence, it was agreed that the focus of any new innovation should be on developing perseverance outside the boys' comfort zone, as well as working collaboratively with others.

Eton's rationale was confirmed by research from leading social academics, business leaders and educational practitioners that indicated a core set of skills and characteristics regarded as necessary for 21st century success. These include the three vital skills of creative leadership, resilience and respect. American educationalist Howard Gardner identified the 'creative mind' as key to 21st century success, while the ability to problem-solve in a creative way was ranked the most important quality in an IBM 2010 survey of 1500 CEOs. Crucially, Sir Ken Robinson, international education advisor, believes that creativity is as important as literacy. Applying creativity involves showing initiative, motivating others, decision making and risking failure.

Resilience incorporates such qualities as perseverance in adversity, taking responsibility and developing a competitive spirit. The Nobel Prize winner James Heckman has demonstrated that resilience ultimately counts for more than just IQ in careers, while the Young Foundation study identified 'strength of character/perseverance' as the single biggest driver of academic success.

The third characteristic, respect, is more difficult to pin down but broadly refers to the importance of interdependency. As

Howard Gardner comments on the importance of 'respectful' and 'ethical' minds in the 21st century: 'Clearly we can no longer build a wall that isolates groups from one another indefinitely.'

Armed with solid background research and the commitment to innovate, Eton joined forces with local state school Windsor Boys' and The Outward Bound Trust to design a bespoke course that would challenge the boys and provide a truly distinctive experience.

Tony Little, the Head Master of Eton, has commented: "Adventurous training programmes of one kind or another are familiar to many of our boys. What is different in Eton+plus is boys working collaboratively in an unfamiliar environment with people they do not know, and then reflecting individually and collectively on what they have learnt. Together, these boys have an opportunity to learn more about each other – and about themselves."

A core design principle of the programme was introducing the students to an unfamiliar setting in which they were taken outside their physical, mental and emotional comfort zone, to work collaboratively with other students who were new to them. The goal was to expose them to a significant level of challenge that would enable them to face adversity and learn from failure, and to develop the skills needed to cope, recover and thrive despite setbacks.

Several objectives were agreed upon. These included improving students' skills in setting and achieving personal goals, developing their resilience in overcoming setbacks, improving confidence and developing self-awareness. In addition, the programme was designed to teach students

Running water on tap.



Raft survival.

to make good decisions and take responsibility for their consequences, and to help them experience and understand leadership and develop a range of skills around improving communication, planning and problem solving.

In striving towards these objectives, it was intended that students would also recognise more keenly the importance of considering and appreciating others, becoming more environmentally aware and developing their experience of service. Overall, the programme was designed to develop skills that cannot be gained in a classroom setting.

The pilot group set off for their fortnight in Scotland, full of trepidation, excitement and curiosity. On site, students were split into five groups of ten, with five boys from each school making up each group. Each student received three 1:1 sessions with their instructor, and also took part in group reflective sessions, involving journaling and coaching techniques, which helped to facilitate their learning and promote their self-awareness. Briggy Kiddle, an independent performance coach, attended the course as a key member of staff and made a significant contribution towards the theory-based and reflective sessions.

The students experienced different types and levels of learning on the course. Practical learning included outdoor overnight activities that became increasingly difficult throughout the fortnight. This type of learning was the most challenging on an individual and group level. Secondly the group engaged in a number of social tasks on the course, associated with the deliberate mixing of students from Eton College and The Windsor Boys' School.

This provided a significant additional dimension to the programme, and facilitated extensive learning opportunities for all students. They were required to get to know new people in an unfamiliar environment, and to work together in their groups, often under pressure, to achieve shared goals. Indeed, the social mixing and strong relationship between the two schools were recognised as pivotal to the success of the

programme and achievement of the outcomes.

How effective was the programme in terms of the goals set? The Trust and Eton designed their own research to evaluate the programme and included both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as questionnaires and group interviews. All key stakeholders were involved and the evaluation looked at short term behaviour changes. Longer term changes are to be monitored as the programme progresses.

The evaluation indicated a shared view that the pilot is an impressive programme that provided students with a unique and enriching opportunity to develop valuable life skills. Students, teachers and parents all attested to the programme's effectiveness in developing and accelerating the students' maturity, both in how they interact with others and in how they manage themselves, especially in the most challenging of circumstances. The experience enabled students to test and hone skills that cannot be developed in a classroom, and has thus provided a valuable addition to the education provided by both participating schools.

There was also clear evidence from all stakeholders involved in the evaluation that the programme enabled students to develop self-awareness, the ability to persevere, the ability to work effectively with others, and an improved understanding of leadership. These results are supported by quantitative data collected through a pre- and post-course survey, which demonstrated increases to the students' perseverance of effort, self-efficacy, and aspects of their social competence.

For example, 98% of students agreed at the end of the course that they had developed their ability to persevere when outside their comfort zone; 96% of students agreed that they became more aware of how their behaviour affects those around them; and 94% of students agreed that they developed their ability to work collaboratively with others.

The programme constituted a rich and varied set of experiences that contributed towards the students' learning throughout the course, as one Eton College student commented:

Out and about

“I don’t think the course’s value can really be put down to one specific thing – it is the many different experiences and environments that, together, combine to form a very enriching experience.”

Parents were also confident that their sons showed a number of significant changes following the course. 88% of parents agreed that their son had shown or begun to show increased confidence; 81% of parents agreed that their son had shown or begun to show increased awareness of other people’s feelings; and 81% of parents agreed that their son had shown or begun to show increased willingness to take responsibility for himself and his actions.

The observation made most frequently by parents following the course was an increased level of maturity in their son, which is reflected in the following comment provided by one Eton College parent: “He has courage, ambition and deep spiritual understanding but what Eton+plus has given him are some invaluable tools and methodologies to build an inner framework that has the potential to be a castle not a house of cards.”

Whilst the evaluation focused on understanding the outcomes of the programme, many of the strengths of the pilot emerged through the interviews with teachers and students. The wilderness location and length of the course, the use of learning models, the emphasis on skills days and overnight expeditions, and the social mix created through the involvement of a partner school were all considered to be integral to the success of the programme.

Jonnie Noakes and Mark Fielker, the course developers at Eton, comment: “It was clear from the feedback we received that the boys found the course enjoyable but stretching. They discovered that the coping strategies they habitually use in their home and school environments no longer worked when they were under pressure, with new people, in an unfamiliar environment. They had to develop better strategies, based on a deeper, more accurate understanding of themselves and of others; and this new awareness greatly enhanced their ability to contribute towards the success of the group.”

Importantly, the feedback suggests that the programme was effective in meeting the needs of the majority of students, whether as a transformative experience or one that has

facilitated the further development of existing tendencies and capabilities. As the course created a level playing field amongst students, those with less confidence prior to the course have benefited from the opportunity to rise to the challenge and excel in ways that are new to them.

One teacher from The Windsor Boys’ School described how he observed this change within his particular group: “A few individuals have really found their resilience tested and they’ve really embraced the course and excelled. That’s just in one group, ten individuals, but those three or four, especially after the evaluations, some boys have said that ‘before I couldn’t do that, I wouldn’t have had the confidence in myself to do that’... And they are small guys, yet these small guys have outshone the much bigger, dominant leaders, they’ve outshone them.”

With any innovative programme, short-term outcomes are easier to measure than longer-term effects. Nevertheless, there was a strong sense from all stakeholders involved that the course will continue to benefit the participating students in a number of different ways.

Students reported feeling stronger, more resourceful and more self-aware, and having a clear belief that they will be able to cope when challenges arise in the future. As one Eton student put it: “The course will equip you with the skills needed to maximise your potential both at school and beyond. You will learn through experiences in an exciting environment with a great mix of people. The experience will be immensely rewarding – hard work but good fun.”

What of the future for the Eton+plus initiative? According to Noakes and Fielker, the intention is to roll the programme out to more boys from both schools. “The skills that the course teaches the boys – resourcefulness, resilience, reciprocity, self-confidence, self-reliance and respect for themselves and others – are central to their education as fully rounded people who will have the confidence to take their place and make their contribution in the world. We would like to see as many boys as possible take the course, and we are now looking at how we can make this happen.”

Natalie Harling is Head of Education at the Outward Bound Trust.



Taking the long view.

Piscean's rashness rewarded

Organising Seaford College's first community action day

Being a Piscean I'm prone to making rash decisions. In my last job, after a few nano-seconds reflection, I agreed with two neighbours to run a half marathon the following weekend. I was no longer the hirsute, lean, sub-60-minutes-for-a-ten-mile-road-run club runner I had been when I arrived, but a balding, slightly overweight, indoor-rowing-and-cycling-fit plodder. But I started and I finished and no one was watching the clock!

Scroll forward four years and link Piscean rashness with a new Head wanting to 'make a mark', and you find a scenario something like this. The new Head of Seaford College, John Green, comes to The Pink House (aka the student support centre) mid May and, *a propos* of nothing, declares "I want to organise a community action day for the end of term. The idea is that all the Year 9s, 10s and 12s with staff are off site doing good deeds around the community. Clive, I think you're the man for the job..." To which I replied in the immortal words "OK then... (*Gulp!*)" Eight weeks to go, one of which is half term.

I'm sure that this happened on a Monday because Mondays that year had been the day from hell – back-to-back teaching with double lessons of bottom sets sandwiching the beginning and end of the day – and if anything was to go wrong it would be on Monday. So ... one blank sheet of paper and *los*, as they say in a language I'm supposed to speak.

Where to start? I thought of organisations that might like help or where I had seen groups working. I came up with initial groupings of animal sanctuaries, disability centres, special schools and beach cleaning. Being a relative new boy to the area, my detailed knowledge about these things wasn't great, so I started to Google searches like 'Animal sanctuaries in West Sussex' and made up a grid of contact details. Then the phone calling started in order to sell the day to potential clients.

Most of the organisations I spoke to were very positive and were interested in being part of the day. The most useful information that I got from them was the number of students they could take and what age restrictions applied. Those who declined to participate did so mainly because they wanted volunteers on a regular basis because of training involved, but this negative became a positive as you will see.

Beach cleaning was an interesting one to organise, because the first thing one has to find out is who owns which part of the coast. What I thought were public beaches were privately



Headmaster at Sainsbury's.

owned and applications for a licence had to be made to the relevant estate. The public beaches turned out to be the responsibility of Chichester District Council and, once in contact with them, the information and help that I got was first class and their help in advising me on how to put together a risk assessment means that I am an expert on what to do with unmentionables when you find them on a beach.

So the ball was starting to roll but, like a Chinese puzzle, just when you think you've got the plot, the whole scenario changes. As new Heads like to woo the local feeder schools, both independent and state, the next message was "Let's get the local junior and infant schools onto the campus and organise something for them here too". So another "OK then"

Out and about



Animal welfare.

resulted in a young member of the PE department being asked if she could mastermind an activity programme on site. We came up with a rough programme of activities that could be worked on and so ... another round of phone calls.

Unfortunately the local prep schools had to decline because they were breaking up the day after and so their final week was pretty full. One of the local schools could only come if we provided transport because a trip to Goodwood had blown the transport budget. I confidently said "Of course we can ...". One hundred-plus pupils and teachers – that's two coach trips (note to see the boss about putting on free transport).

Another local school said they liked the idea but could they have more details! Details? The outline is as hazy as the South Downs in fog. "I'll book you in and be in contact later."

After about ten days of behind-the-scenes work, the project was announced to the staff at the weekly staff meeting. This could go either way – last week of term; no one really wants to be put under the cosh; everyone wants a nice gentle roll into the summer holidays; what will they make of this? Cue from the Head: "Clive's got something to say..." ("Thanks, boss", under my breath). Anyway, I sell it as a fun day out, all you have to do is turn up, supervise a bunch of students, different activities, you don't have to do anything, just enjoy, I'll do the donkey work. No one actually threw anything at me.

And then it started – the ball did start to roll. Head of department to me: "I need to see you about something". Oh dear, sounds ominous – is it a CPO issue, boarding issue, other

issue? No. The HOD's wife is finance manager of a special school in Worthing and they are looking for volunteers, could he take a group?

A young head of history who is active in a local church, asks if a group could help out on a deprived estate in Chichester as part of their on-going project. The partner of one of our teachers is a fire-fighter. He volunteers to take on the task of cutting through the politics of getting permission for a group of students from West Sussex to take part in an activity day at a fire station in East Sussex.

A sixth former suggests cleaning the local War Memorial. The Rev says he'll take a group to clean the church in the village. Nurseries where colleagues send their children want our students. Bag packing is suggested, car washing is suggested. The project has now got a momentum of its own.

With an activity programme taking place on site, I try to bring in a Chinook from RAF Odiham, as they regularly fly over us when they circle the Down; and the display team from the local fire brigade to add a bit of *pizzazz* to the day's proceedings. Although the fire brigade did book themselves in, unfortunately we couldn't use them because of time constraints, but we put them on hold for the future.

The PR officer at Odiham liked the idea but couldn't promise anything. I try to call in some chips from a former colleague's son who is now an officer in the Coldstream Guards based at Windsor and owes me for his A grades at A level French and German. He'd love to bring some of the boys over with the toys, but they're deploying to Kenya that Monday! He'll come next year.

Next, meet with the operations director. "Risk assessments, Clive?" I was trying to forget those. He wasn't. So I start to research on risk assessments from the internet. I have a subsequent meeting with the operations director and our health and safety consultant, both happy with what I've done so far. A letter to parents is roughed out so they know exactly what is happening.

I go and visit some of the venues to get a picture of the environment in which our students will be working. I saw parts of West Sussex I never knew existed and realised that there is not much difference between a stubborn donkey and certain Year 11s when you want to move them from A to B.

Transport. This was going to be tricky. We have five minibuses, but one of those will be at CCF camp. The list of venues was expanding; we had to bus in the children from the local schools and my number of D1 drivers is limited. The suggestion was made to contact the coach companies with whom we have the daily contracts to see if they will loan us coaches for free for that day. One gives us the loan of a free 55-seater, whilst another supplies coaches at cost. Once venues were finalised and student and staff numbers confirmed, the logistics were worked out.

The colleague co-ordinating the activity day has asked for volunteers to run sessions and is able to put on a carousel of four activities, including music and poetry. She has two problems – some PE staff are on a rugby tour and other colleagues have a heavy timetable that day in our junior school and so cannot take part. The programme is eventually firmed up and sent to the junior schools.

Back to the operations director: "What about safety-wear like high vis jackets, gloves *etc.* We've got an account at Screwfix." Oh yes, the Screwfix Catalogue, more interesting

than any set book I've taught or read at A level! I've also got a legitimate reason to read it in the library. The order is worked out and sent off with a massive discount.

I then do a round robin of the local radio stations, newspapers and magazines. Spirit FM say they will interview the Head and me. Local newspapers are interested – can I get high quality photos to them plus copy? The reporter from Spirit arrives, but the Head can't make it, so I give the interview. I basically say that this is the first one of many and that we want the community programme to roll out through the year. Head pleased with it. Phew!

Getting the catering organised had to be sorted. A glazed look falls over the head of catering's face when he finds out that we need 250 packed lunches plus catering for over 100 pupils from local schools coming on site (the tinies will bring their own packed lunches). Phone round local schools to make sure that they are happy with arrangements and – POW! – discover that one of the little people is allergic to both primary contact with strawberries or strawberry extract and also to secondary and tertiary contact. Explain this to catering manager and agree a strawberry exclusion zone.

The day arrives and I get up extra early to walk the dog. It looks ominous – drizzle and cloud is hanging low over the Down, a bad sign. My wife and I break out the Screwfix cartons and start to get the kit sorted. I begin to wonder what it was like organising D Day with not one spreadsheet, computer or mobile phone in sight. A quick breakfast, final preparations and the troops arrive. The Head has a word, I have a word, the colleagues i/c activities gather their groups together and go through the briefing documents I've prepared. Then it's green light and off we go.

I take a group to an animal sanctuary, drop off and decide to reverse my batting order and swing by local infant school. The tinies are already badged and lined up in groups like army sections waiting to board a Chinook. They all say hello and have a smiley face when they get on the minibus. I wonder what it is that changes this friendliness to the truculence of later years! At last all the groups are out and clips from my interview are being played on Spirit FM's news bulletins every hour. We're getting good coverage.

After a car wash drop off in Midhurst I head for the Petworth car park – all going well there. The War Memorial team are hard at it and ask if I can get a plant that can be put in a pot by the wreaths. I go to school, see the Head and am pleased that I still have a job. He's going out and about around the venues. The dining room is rocking and the only slight disaster with the tinies is that one has had a toilet mishap, otherwise feedback good. Check emails to make sure that there hasn't been a problem along the line. Nope, all OK there: texts coming in are all positive. It's time for the pick-ups.

A snack was put on for students as they arrived back, followed by an assembly. It was here that the impact of the day on students and staff began to show. The Head spoke briefly and so did I. We asked for feedback from the groups on what they had learnt from the day. It started slowly and then more and more students wanted to speak, even those who are normally reticent. It was quite a moving experience. Later in the evening three members of staff say that it is the best thing that they have ever done since being at Seaford.

Would we do it again? A massive yes! The community day is now going to be an annual feature on our calendar. Did it

have an impact? Most certainly! The photos and feedback that we got from centres said it all. Our intention is to get students out and about at venues during games and CCF afternoons so that the flag keeps flying. Centres who said that they were only interested if students could come on a regular basis will be contacted again to see if they could make use of those preparing for Silver and Gold DofE.

It could have gone horribly wrong but didn't, thanks to the determination of students, staff and venues to make the whole thing work. And for next year, I've got more time to organise what I hope will be a bigger and even better event. A Piscean rush of blood to the head, yes, but an immensely rewarding experience for all.

Clive Thorpe teaches modern languages at Seaford College.

Fire engine attitude.



Demolishing stereotypes and building houses

Jane Williams makes the journey from hard science theory to hard hat reality

According to a recent report published by the Institute of Physics (IoP), 49% of state-funded mixed schools in England are 'reinforcing gender stereotypes' in terms of the subjects students study at A level. The report revealed that in many mixed state schools, the proportion of girls taking physics is even lower than the national average, which is already very skewed at just one girl to every four boys.

The lack of female role models has a profound effect on girls choosing A levels, says sociologist Louise Archer at King's College, London. "For girls in particular, physics is seen as being a very masculine subject. So the girls who like physics have to work a lot harder to balance it with that notion of normal femininity."

At Farlington, however, as Lucy Rutherford, subject leader: physics says, "We have no gender stereotyping by subject or by peers; we have positive, female role models and teachers with degrees in their specialisms. These are not typical conditions on a national basis and are hugely important in encouraging the girls to continue with science subjects.

"In the current lower sixth, 31% of students study three or more science and maths A levels and 38% study at least one physical science (physics or chemistry), with 80% of these taking both physics and chemistry. In the upper sixth, 45% of students study two or more A levels in science and maths with 40% studying at least one physical science.

"All faculty members strive to ensure that our students, at whatever level, become familiar with the 'wow' factor that science has in so many ways. Currently, we have students applying to read chemistry, analytical chemistry, civil engineering, aeronautical engineering, mathematics, biomedical science and, of course, medicine at university and three former pupils are currently completing PhDs on topics in biology, chemistry and physics."

Alan Maude, Farlington's head of faculty: mathematics and natural sciences, outlines why the school is winning the battle against these prejudices. "The girls have time to become more confident; they are not made to feel that science is just for boys; they can make mistakes in a non-threatening environment. The teachers at Farlington understand the way in which girls learn science and can help them to develop a love of the subject that lasts way beyond their school years."

Perhaps this resistance to gender stereotyping is one of the reasons why 13 girls from Farlington built a house this summer: a house in Zambia. Jane Williams takes up the story.

“The house that Farlington built is in a small town called Mwandi and will be home to a grandmother and five grandchildren. Why no parents? Tragically, in a story that is repeated throughout Zambia, they are dead. The life expectancy here is just 40 years. One in seven people in Zambia are HIV positive or have AIDS. The parent generation



It works in practice but will it work in theory?

is being wiped out, leaving the grandparents to raise the next generation.

The house was the culmination of 18 months' work leading up to the trip. Each girl had to raise almost £3000 to fund their venture. They got weekend and evening jobs; they washed an endless number of cars; they baked hundreds of cakes; they even cycled from Southwater to Brighton Pier in Santa suits!

The trip was organised by a specialist company called True Adventure. Our guide, the amazing Lorraine, ran the trip and ensured that every girl had the opportunity to lead the group, be the accountant, oversee the day *etc.* True Adventure's philosophy is that the students run the show. Every single girl not only accepted the challenge but also shone in their various roles. Who needs a teacher? Not this group!

The excitement at Gatwick Airport before the party left was sky-high – and that was just the accompanying staff! The flight, via Dubai, took 12 hours before the party landed in the capital, Lusaka. A six-hour bus trip south ended up taking ten hours owing to an overloaded bus and an argument with a police officer about where the bus could stop!

Livingstone was finally reached and the next day our group visited the stunning Victoria Falls. Travelling on to Mwandi the following day, the party was delighted to reach

their campsite, not least because of the enormous pot-holes in the roads which made it a bumpy and, at times, hazardous journey.

The next morning our group faced a stark very basic wooden structure, literally the outline frame of a small building. We had just a few days to turn it into a desperately needed house. Long branches were woven through the uprights. Next, balls of mud were put into the gaps to begin to create walls. Well, mud is actually something of a euphemism, it was actually material from termite mounds – in fact termite waste. Luckily it did not smell!

The termite waste had to be mixed with just the exact amount of water in order to create the right texture. This was seriously hard work, much like mixing concrete simply with two shovels rather than a convenient cement-mixer. All the girls worked like Trojans in the African sun, but Mr Dwyer did the lion's share of this back-breaking work. Limbs aching, the group returned the next day to 'plaster' the walls ... okay more termite-waste, but mixed with more water.

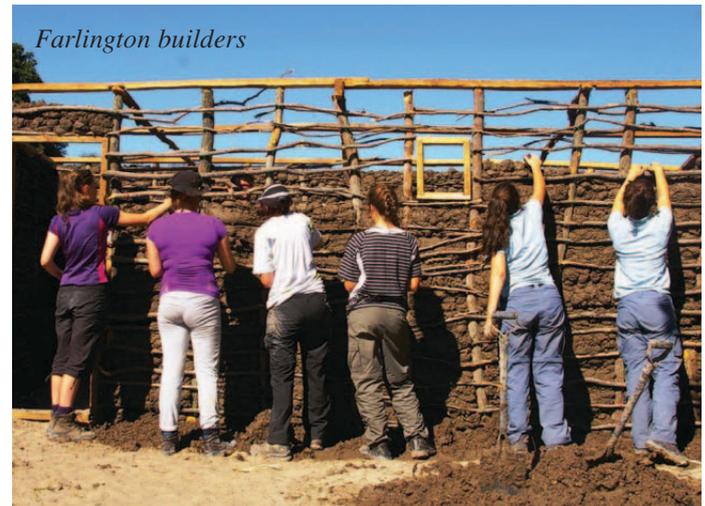
This was left to dry and the final day saw the smoothest, wettest 'plaster' yet. Lo and behold a house had been built. Left to dry for two weeks it would then be fitted with a metal roof, and the family, who had been on the waiting list for over two years, could move in and the labourers set off for a trek in the African bush and a night camping under the stars.

What was unexpected was the interaction with local children on the way. Lunch turned into a two-hour game with a group of children who were fascinated by the digital

cameras showing them their beautiful faces in the viewfinder. Everyone had been changed by the trip, humbled by the happiness the people of Zambia showed. The kindness and warm welcome was overwhelming at times.

It was very moving that people who had so little should be so welcoming and grateful that we had come to do this simple thing. There was also great joy in working with girls who didn't simply talk about helping but were willing to build a house for people they did not know and would never meet.”

Jane Williams is a head of year at Farlington School.



Farlington builders



Farlington river.

Cross Country Centenary

Lancing College has just celebrated the centenary of the Cross Country Race between pupils from the College and South London Harriers, the famous running club. This is one of the oldest sporting fixtures anywhere, and the superb yet challenging countryside through which competitors run makes it unique.

Over the years, teams from other schools have joined the race. This year, Charterhouse, Sevenoaks School, Ardingly College, The John Fisher School and Brighton College also ran the three- and five-mile courses.

The course has hardly changed over 100 years. It takes the runners from one prominent landscape feature to another, starting just above the school, and includes lightly ploughed fields, steep valleys and hills, woods, downland, farmyards, marshy meadows, fences and exhilarating tracks on high ground with views to the sea. There is one difference in the present-day race – girls now also compete.

This year's race was run on a grey, wet, windy afternoon – just about perfect conditions for cross country running – and after the run, all competitors enjoyed a well-deserved slice of a special Centenary Cake!



Tasmin Little in concert

As part of Godolphin School's Inspiring People Series, and in conjunction with the English Speaking Union, world renowned violinist Tasmin Little celebrated youth and music in Salisbury in a concert in Salisbury Cathedral on Friday, 7th March.

The concert, attended by almost 800 people, featured musicians and choristers from the Salisbury Youth Orchestra, Godolphin Orchestra, Godolphin School Choir, Godolphin Prep Choir, Godolphin Vocal Ensemble, Godolphin Voices, Leaden Hall Choir, Downton Primary School Choir, St Edmund's School Chamber Choir and two choirs from the Salisbury Cathedral School.

The musicians attended a masterclass given by Tasmin in the afternoon and then performed alongside her in the evening. Tasmin spoke of the opportunities given her through the generosity of the English Speaking Union's scholarship programme and the work she does with underprivileged children through music and the Kids Camp Charity.

Funds raised from the concert, in excess of £12,000, will be shared equally between the ESU, Kids Camp and the Salisbury Cathedral Choral Foundation.



Queen's Scout Award

Seventeen-year-old Ben Summerfield has been invited to attend the annual parade of the Queen's Scouts at Windsor Castle after having been awarded his Queen's Scout Award.

He will form part of a contingent of Queen's Scouts performing a Guard of Honour at Windsor Castle on St George's Day, when the Queen and the Royal party return after the service. "Receiving my Queen's Scout Award and being chosen to be part of the Guard of Honour has given me a huge sense of achievement and is a big honour," said Ben.

Ben joined the Scouts when he was five years old and the Queen's Scout Award is the highest award that can be obtained in the Scout movement. "I worked my way up through Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and finally obtained the Queen's Scout Award. The experience I have gained has definitely made me more outgoing and confident", said the Bedford Modern School Year 13 student.



Girls join the premiere league of school football

Girls at Cheadle Hulme School are proving it's not a man's world on the football pitch, as the school has become home to the first ever Independent Schools' Football Association Northern Girls' Squad.

Leanne Curl, business and economics teacher, was approached by the ISFA to set up the region's premiere girls' squad earlier this year. The regional representative team will star two of the school's Year 11 students, Hafsa Maududi and Charlotte Wright, who currently play for the CHS U15 team.

Miss Curl, a Newcastle United supporter who was a keen footballer in her own school days, said: "It was a complete surprise to be asked to set-up the Northern Squad and I'm delighted to be part of it. It's a fantastic opportunity for all the schools involved and is great recognition for the wealth of female footballing talent in the region."

Trials for the squad took place at Cheadle Hulme School in January and the final team features girls from other local schools and from Leeds and Lancashire. The Northern team will take part in the U18 regional representative tournament at Harrow School in March, following which selections are made for the ISFA National Squad.

"We're all really looking forward to our first big appearance. Fingers-crossed we have some future national representatives on the team too!" says Miss Curl.



Leanne Curl with Charlotte Wright (left) and Hafsa Maududi (right).

Engineer in residence

The Easter quarter at Oundle School saw the visit of Swansea University's aerospace engineer Dr Ben Evans as part of the new Engineer in Residence scheme. The scheme, initiated by Sanderson Fellow and Chemistry teacher Dr James Bessent, is aimed to educate and inspire the pupils about the role of a modern day engineer.

"Oundle has a rich history in engineering and it is hoped that the visit will inspire the next generation of Oundle pupils into considering engineering as a career path. Engineering courses have moved well beyond the confines of the manufacturing industry and involve greater blurring of disciplines, especially across the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. One of the aims of this visit was to showcase the range of careers and skill sets within engineering and to open pupils' eyes to the diversity – and the future – of the industry as a whole" says Dr Bessent.

Dr Evans's packed three-day timetable saw him deliver classes in aerodynamics to U6th physicists as well as wowing audiences with his work as lead aerodynamicist on the Bloodhound SSC car, a supersonic car which Bloodhound hope will exceed 1000mph come 2016. Alongside this Dr Evans also visited Laxton Junior School for a one hour extravaganza and gave careers advice at a drop-in careers surgery.



The Pierian Spring

John Field suggests ways to help your students make intelligent use of the internet

The consensus may be that physical libraries are a thing of the past, but our students have never needed the library service more. Far from merely offering its readers slow PCs and yellowing Mills and Boon novels, the United Kingdom's library service has put together an array of online resources, available from any computer and accessible using the barcode printed on your library card.

The majority of these subscription resources are invisible to Google, illustrating the fact that, although we presume that access to the internet gives us unlimited access to its knowledge, premium content is reserved for those who are prepared to pay ... or have library cards.

The scandal here is that the existence of these resources has not been shared with the nation's teachers and their students, especially sixth formers, despite the fact that this would give hundreds of thousands of young people a compelling reason to join their local libraries. 'To Google' entered the *OED* in 2000, indicating that internet searches have become a monoculture. Katherine Spackman, Oxfordshire's lead librarian for information services, conducted a survey in my school and I would imagine that her findings apply to almost any student body in the country.

She wrote that, 'Such is its dominance, that Google has become shorthand for the source of the information itself,

John Field.



rather than as the retriever of results.' So, one of our tasks as teachers in the 21st century is to highlight to our students that most commercial search engines list *all* resources, whether credible or not, as well as search information unsuitable for school-age students, prioritizing the needs of paying advertisers. This is not necessarily the best way to approach schoolwork.

So, if you haven't got one already, the first thing that you'll need is a library card. You'll find a URL listing the websites for every authority's library service at the end of this article and most of them now let you join online (useful for getting whole year groups to join too, but do warn your library service first). Once you've got your library card, you will be able to access the likes of:

Britannica Online

There are three editions of this resource, with the Student edition pitched at 11-18 year olds. Your students can kiss goodbye to hours of 'internet research.' Here they will find concise, age-appropriate articles which allow them to generate a citation using any one of four citation style rules. You won't

HERE & THERE

Paper dress

A paper dress, designed by King's Ely's Connie Wynn, has been shortlisted for The National Fashion Textiles Competition. Connie's stunning paper garment was one of only 20 designs to be shortlisted for the competition, aimed at talented fashion students aged 16 to 19 from schools across the UK.

The winner of the competition was due to be announced at The Spring Knitting and Stitching Show in Olympia, London. Connie's distinguished dress, along with a collection of work by King's Ely's A level textiles students, will be on display in The National Fashion Textiles Gallery throughout the exhibition.

Alison Rhodes, director of art, said: "The standard of entries for the competition was exceptionally high and we are delighted that Connie's inspired piece has been shortlisted. Our AS and A2 textiles students have been invited to exhibit their work during the show, which will provide the school with further national exposure and opportunities to make invaluable links with industry."





Just the ticket.

find this sort of feature on dubious free online resources and it's a good way to help your students to start to understand how and why we reference our sources.

Oxford Art & Oxford Music Online (formerly Grove)

Even today, the 34-volume 2003 edition of *The Grove Dictionary of Art* will set you back around £600. Why buy paper reference resources when they quickly become outdated? Besides, if you're teaching in a day school, a resource like this is of little use locked in the library as your students sweat over their prep of an evening. Volumes like these are too valuable to borrow anyway. The online version is updated constantly with high-quality colour images – the yellowing copy on your shelves just can't keep up.

National Geographic Archive

As Katherine Spackman pointed out to my students, it is important to think laterally when using these resources. It would be tempting to steer clear of this one if you're not a geographer, but that would be to miss the arresting images. These are of potential interest to all students of art, photography and textiles, before we get on to the English teachers looking for ways to generate exciting writing. Images and articles are tagged separately, making this a breathtakingly beautiful and versatile resource.

Naxos Music Library

It takes a little care to access this one, as you need to create your own login and password. You might also decide to download the app to your phone or tablet but, once you're ready, you can search and stream 94,000 CDs from a range of premium classical labels. Moreover, if you're searching for a specific track, you'll be able to compare different recordings and interpretations. How many of our students have peripatetic music lessons? Not only is this resource a pleasure to anyone who enjoys music, it is also invaluable to those preparing to perform or studying for music examinations.

UK Newsstand

This is a powerful one-stop-shop that allows you to search hundreds of UK national, regional and local newspapers, including *The Times* and *The Financial Times*. On search engines like Google, these titles disappeared behind paywalls a couple of years ago. You can also access content from *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman*, as well as some international newspapers.

The Times Digital Archive, 1785-2008

Every word and image from *The Times* since 1785 is now fully searchable, including advertisements and the classified section. You can choose to view a facsimile of a whole page, or just an article. It's hard to think of a curriculum area that wouldn't be interested in a resource like this.

There you are in an English lesson studying Thomas Hardy's poem, *The Oxen*, wondering how to tackle the poem's context but, seeing it tucked away at the bottom of page 7 on the 24th December, 1915, the surrounding headlines make it all rather obvious: 'Drink or War Loan? A suggestion for the New Year' and 'The Second War Christmas.'

Finally, if for no other reason, your students should join the library to access *Theory Test Pro* and save themselves a packet when learning to drive.

These are just a few highlights from the reference package offered by our libraries and it's so good that, at Tudor Hall, we're asking our students to join. Please, help us get the word out, and share this fabulous resource with the maintained and independent schools in your area.

UK Public Libraries: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ac940/weblibs.html>

John Field is director of teaching and learning at Tudor Hall School. He tweets as @johnfield1 and his contemporary poetry blog, Poor Rude Lines, is at johnfield.org

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Monmouth School at 400

Gloucestershire's Golden Guildman

There are few schools in Britain that can trace their history back 400 unbroken years on the same site. To mark this milestone, a commemorative book is charting this history, beginning with Monmouth School's enigmatic benefactor, William Jones.

Born in the mid-16th century in Newland in Gloucestershire, five miles from Monmouth, legend has it that Jones went to London like Dick Whittington to seek his fortune, but he most

likely had some financial backing to set him up as a trader.

Becoming a member of the Merchant Adventurers trading guild, and then the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers liveried guild, he spent most of his working life based in the port of Stade on the River Elbe in Germany, just over 20 miles from Hamburg, the biggest city in Germany at the time. He made a fortune trading in the likes of wool and linen, and was described at his death in Hamburg in 1615, in a letter written

Monmouth's St Paul's Service.





Jacobean pupil's graffiti.

by the city's Lord Mayor, as the richest merchant in the city.

William Jones left £9000 to the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers to establish a school and almshouses in Monmouth and in his birthplace Newland. Money was also left for the poor of Hamburg and Stade and for an orphanage, alongside bequests to nieces, nephews and servants.

As a devout Protestant, and in the wake of the 1611 publication of the King James Bible, the choice of Monmouth for a new school was partly religious, as Monmouthshire was a hotbed of Catholic recusancy. The William Jones's Schools Foundation stipulated that the school would have a Headmaster, an assistant master and a 'lecturer' – a preacher – who was to be paid more than the Headmaster, a sign of the importance Jones attached to spreading the Protestant gospel.

He also founded the 'Golden Lecture' (named after the spectacular yields of the initial endowment), a religious lecture given annually in the church of St Bartholomew-the-Less in the City of London, given this year by the Bishop of Southwark in St Paul's Cathedral, in the course of the school's 400th Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving.

With their share of the bequest, the Haberdashers bought large areas of land in south-east London to fund the school,

which, when sold to railway companies in the 19th century, realised a significant sum for reinvestment. Monmouth School is still administered by the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers as part of the Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools group, which comprises sister school Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls, The Grange and Inglefield House preparatory schools and Agincourt pre-preparatory and nursery school. Over four centuries as trustee, the Company has played a major role in every key capital development at the Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools and guided Monmouth School through rough and smooth.

The school's archives have revealed several artefacts connected with the school's early days, including a pupil's caricature of a teacher wearing a ruff and a lovingly scripted letter, dated 1626, sent by a schoolboy to his father. Children were expected to pay an entrance fee of two shillings, or sixpence if the boy was poor, and they were expected to provide their own books, stationery and candles.

Lessons in English, Latin and Greek began at 7am with 'a Godly prayer', and lasted until 11am, when there was a translation exercise based on the New Testament, followed by more lessons from 12.30pm to 5pm, when the school

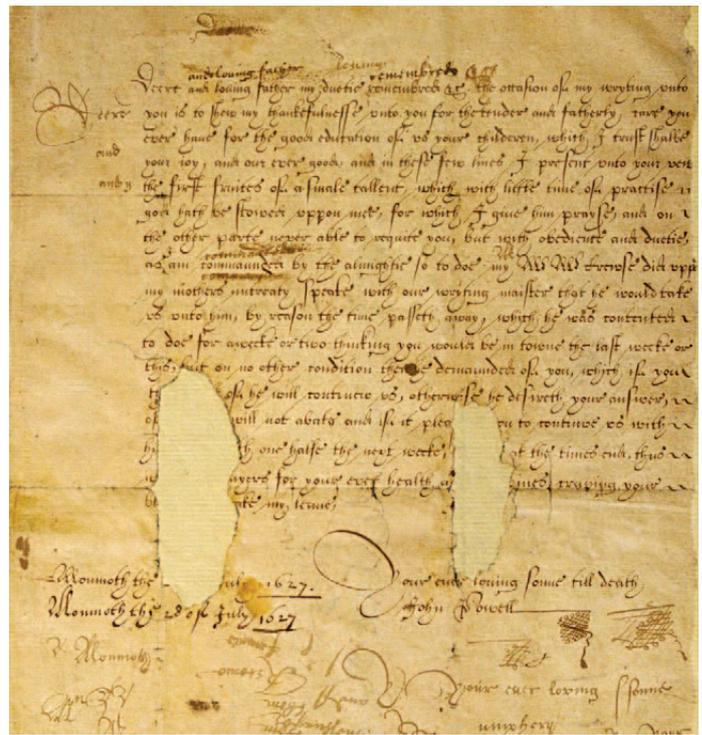
day ended with a Bible reading, prayers and the singing of a psalm. As well as the long days, there were only seven weeks of annual holiday, with a gruelling stretch of school from June to Christmas, and fierce discipline to correct the ‘vices which reign amongst the ignorant and profane multitude’, including such misdemeanours as swearing and gaming.

Since the late 19th century, the school has gone on to thrive, with steadily growing numbers. Direct Grant education, which saw Local Education Authorities fund some places at the school, was ended in 1976 and later replaced by the Assisted Places Scheme, which ran until 1997.

Since then, the Haberdashers have introduced their own Assisted Places Scheme, and around two out of every seven pupils are helped in some way financially. To mark the completion of four centuries of educational excellence, Haberdashers’ Monmouth Schools offered eight 400th Anniversary Scholarships, four for each senior school, worth 40% of fees, for children showing outstanding musical, academic or sporting ability.

The sister school, Haberdashers’ Monmouth School for Girls, was founded, still with money from the William Jones endowment, at the end of the 19th century. In addition, the Haberdashers founded an elementary school in Monmouth in 1901, the beginning of public schooling in the town; West Monmouth School in Pontypool in 1898; and the future Usk College of Agriculture in 1913; and gave funding to King Henry VIII School in Abergavenny. Between them, the five schools employ more than 500 people, providing a major economic boost to the town, whilst the wider community also shares in the two senior schools’ excellent sporting and performing arts facilities.

Monmouth School shares its 400th anniversary with the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War, and will be remembering the sacrifice its own alumni and staff made



A scripted letter from a son to his father, dated 1627.

in the conflict. Indeed, a century ago, the school’s 300th anniversary celebrations were curtailed by the ‘war to end all wars’, as teachers and hundreds of former pupils rushed to sign up.

Stephen Edwards teaches modern languages at Monmouth School.

Monmouth School: The First 400 Years by Stephen Edwards
ISBN 9781906507916 Published by Third Millennium.

Schoolboys play in the snow: a mid-1800s scene.





Why we arm young people

(WITH THE FACTS)

Today, more than ever, young people face a myriad of challenges. With the advent of so-called legal highs, the number of harmful substances available to them is vast, and growing on a daily basis, multiplying the threat already posed by tobacco, illegal drugs and alcohol.

The internet, and in particular social networks, brings with it a number of disturbing elements. Cyber bullying and the widespread availability of sexual content are just two examples.

So we arm young people. With information. We go into schools across the UK and hold open, frank discussions with students. We also hold discussion groups with teachers, parents and guardians, in fact anyone involved with the welfare of young people. We don't lecture, preach, patronise or judge. We engage and involve.

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Our senior facilitators, Bob Tait and Barry Evans, have been conducting these groups both across the UK and in Europe for many years and we currently have ongoing contracts with over 300 schools.

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China – another world and another world language

How to live in interesting times

When three Oundle School pupils studying economics, seven studying Chinese, Mo Tanweer, head of economics, and Hua Yan, head of Chinese, touched down at Shanghai airport after almost a day of travelling, none of them really knew quite what to expect.

The diversity of the experience struck Jeremy Manger, one of the pupils, immediately: “The short coach trip to the school that was to be our home for the next week gave us a glimpse of what lay ahead. We travelled through all the different aspects of Shanghai, through areas of extreme poverty on the outskirts, to the towering skyscrapers of the inner city.”

Over the next week the group participated in a number of activities, both in the school and in the city of Shanghai. They toured the facilities at COMAC, China’s main aircraft manufacturer, and also visited Shanghai Volkswagen. Meanwhile, Rubicon Partners provided several case studies about what it was like to do business in China, particularly for Western firms operating in a very different market and culture.

The rest of the week was spent at Caoyang No 2 High School, a boarding school in Shanghai, where pupils engaged in lessons with the Chinese students and took some trips out in the evenings, including a wonderful acrobatics show and a trip



Oundle in China.



Chinese culture.

on the impressive Maglev Train. The pupils also completed a homestay with their Chinese partners, spending a weekend immersed in the cultural and domestic daily life of Chinese people.

The visit continued in Beijing, as Jeremy Manger writes.

‘At the end of the week we each spent two days at the house of one of the Chinese students, which for most of us was the highlight of our week. At the end of our week in Shanghai, we said our goodbyes and left for Beijing on the high-speed rail.’

Our week in Beijing was just as packed, with tours to Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Olympic Stadium and many other interesting places. The trip was enjoyed thoroughly by all, and was a brilliant opportunity to experience Chinese culture, history and to learn about the future of a country that in one way or another will have a huge impact on our lives.’

For most people, though, China and the Chinese languages remain daunting. Joshua Smith believes, however, that Chinese is not only the language of the future but that it is much easier than you think:

‘There is a common perception that Chinese is impossible to learn, and that anyone who has learnt Chinese must be ridiculously clever and have studied for many years. It’s true that Chinese can be challenging, but there are many aspects of the Chinese language that are really quite easy for English learners.’

For starters, the grammar in Chinese is much simpler than English, French or Spanish. Learners of European languages who struggle with the tricky task of conjugating verbs need not worry. There are no tenses or conjugation in Chinese. What this means in practice is that if you want to change the person doing the action you just change the pronoun (*ie he/*

she/it/they...) and you add a word like tomorrow or yesterday. So ‘I eat yesterday’ becomes ‘You eat tomorrow’. Simple!

The different tones in Chinese can be a potential problem for many learners. They do take practice, but often the tones only need to be emphasized when there are similar sounding words that might also make sense in the context. We learn languages to be understood and most learners of Chinese find that they can be.

Of course, we’d all love to have perfect language skills, and to be able to speak as well, if not better, than a native speaker, but most learners of Chinese need to accept this is not going to be achievable. However, being understood really is!

For those learning Chinese, the most effective way is through practice. However, most learners don’t get enough exposure to the language, so they find that it takes a long time to see improvement.’

Joshua Smith, who is the Managing Director of ChineseBookshop.com found that when he started learning Chinese as an adult, the difficulty was finding interesting Chinese reading material. He began importing fiction books from China to read. This led to starting a website dedicated to Chinese language materials with everything dispatched from the company’s London headquarters.

‘When I learnt Chinese I found that it was impossible to find the books that I wanted to read outside of China. I bought several books direct from China and found that it was very frustrating waiting weeks for them to arrive. I’d only buy a couple of books each time and the postage was several times the cost of the books.’

After a few months, I realised that there was a market out there for Chinese books dispatched from the UK. I imagine I’m the only non-Chinese person in the world running a Chinese bookshop! People are surprised when I tell them that the vast majority of our customers are not Chinese. We stock a huge range of popular fiction books translated into Chinese to make the process of picking up Chinese easy and fun. We provide books with both simplified and traditional Chinese characters for learners at all levels.’

Authors whose works have been translated into Chinese include E L James, Suzanne Collins, Stieg Larsson, George R R Martin, J K Rowling, Stephenie Meyer and old favourites such as Agatha Christie. The website boasts some of the most famous titles ever written, all translated into Chinese.

The site also stocks a vast selection of original Chinese books by popular authors such as 2012 Nobel Prize-winner Mo Yan, Hong Kong Wuxia author Jin Yong, Eileen Chang and Taiwanese illustrator Jimmy Liao, for those who are ready to take the next step in their learning and read an original Chinese novel.

Whether readers want a famous Chinese historical novel such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, or even a Chinese medicine book to immerse themselves fully in the history and culture of the language they are learning, ChineseBookshop.com has the answer.

Many of ChineseBookshop.com’s books are unavailable on the large online bookshops, and for those books that are available, there is usually no detailed information about them. ChineseBookshop.com’s range of books is classified simply on the site with details of which languages are used.

hàn yǔ bìng bù shì yì zhōng nán xué dí yǔ yán

Fanning a passion for literature

Caroline Paice discusses the problem of furnishing students with the best resources



Guiding light.

In my teaching career, I don't think I have ever taught the same set of texts over consecutive years. Some become part of the curriculum diet, but more often, and particularly at GCSE and A level, English departments are in a constant state of planning for the new.

The challenge, which is both exciting and overwhelming, is how to help students access plays, poems and novels that have only just arrived on a specification. There are those texts which haven't been taught before and others where the last set of student notes were written on carbon paper and are now stuffed into the back of a filing cabinet, gathering dust and despair.

It might be easy to succumb to the turgid plod of key events, chapter summaries and character profiles, which traditional crib books are designed to spell out, but this threatens to drive out any passion for literature rather than fan it. In addition,

as exam boards root around for writers, the wealth of critical articles begins to deplete and the internet becomes a cache for resources that lack imagination and accuracy.

Coming across *The Connell Guides* last year was the result of research to avoid the pitfalls of exam-focused textbooks and unreliable articles. I plumped first of all for the guide to Robert Browning's poetry, assured by the credentials of its author, Jonathan Keates, who taught English at the City of London School for 39 years, and who is also a well-respected writer.

The bibliography demonstrates the calibre of experts that Keates has used to inform the guide; Browning heavyweights, such as Chesterton, Hawlin, Karlin and Langbaum distinguish this approach from the straightforward, indexless revision guides that students paraphrase in essays. Additionally, the way in which the contents are built around a series of engaging



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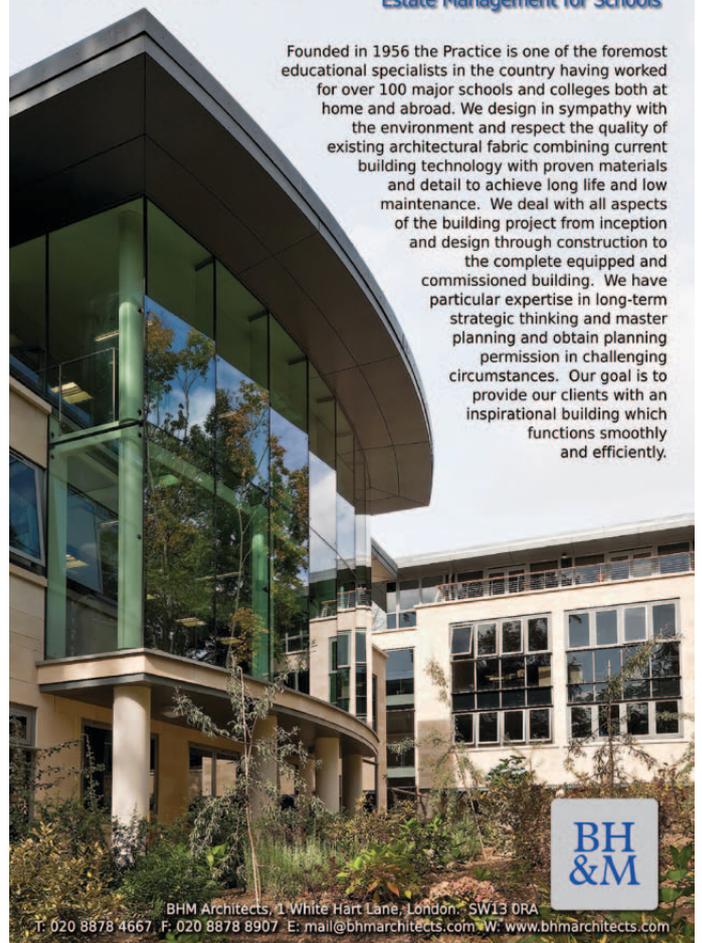
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questions, covering both the significance and influence of historical context and reader response, is an inventive tool.

It was refreshing to read each section and then share with AS students articles that are illuminating and concise, with shorter notes and apt contextualised images blended onto the page to add appeal. The result is an intelligent bridge to critical theory and more accessible than some of the resources I had found using JSTOR. Students were engaged, rather than confused.

The same can also be said for A2 students studying *Antony and Cleopatra*. Close analysis, we appreciated in class, was often complemented by the Connell Guide, this time compiled by Adrian Poole, Professor of English and a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Like the Browning guide, there is a use of questions to explore key ideas, help build confident arguments and explore different interpretations.

The style of writing in these guides is also a key to their success. Students need to engage with the features of an academic response in order to improve their own clarity and precision when exploring and writing about an exam text. The Connell Guide to *The Wasteland*, one of the latest guides in production, is a text we use for comparison with two other texts for A2 coursework.

Demonstrating the complexity of Eliot's poem in a concise and informative way is no easy task, but Seamus Perry's guide is comprehensive and thoroughly researched. Again, the layout, with detailed links that focus on each part of the poem, makes it easy to use and allows students to engage with the language, form and structure of the text.

Having benefitted from *The Connell Guides* at A level, I was interested to see how younger students might benefit from them. We utilized the questions from the Connell Guide to *The Tempest*, written by Shakespeare scholar Graham Bradshaw, to generate discussion about layers of meaning within a text at GCSE. Once students had shared their own ideas, the articles then provided further detail and a clear structure. The Connell Guide to *Pride and Prejudice*, by Janet Todd, the general editor of the Cambridge edition of Jane Austen, extended and challenged Key Stage 3 students.

The Doom of Youth

Sherborne School and the Great War, 1914-1918

Shirburnians were writers. Unceasingly the former pupils who served in the Great War, their teachers and their families wrote about their experiences at the Front, at home and often somewhere in between. Letters, diaries, scholarly historical accounts, memoirs, novels, Patrick Francis has explored them all, a wealth of material, much of it previously unpublished. This is history as recorded by those who were actually involved.

Set in the Dorset countryside, at the heart of the triangle embracing Plymouth, Portsmouth and Salisbury Plain, it is no surprise that Sherborne School had a strong military flavour. Epitomising the late Victorian and Edwardian public school ethos of commitment, loyalty and above all service, it was nonetheless a small community with just over 200 boys in

Since Jolyon Connell introduced these guides, the variety and growing number published, with a promise of six more each year, is impressive. In addition, the subscription offer now adds a digital element. Easily digestible fortnightly literary reviews on individual writers and universal themes, downloadable 'shorts' on modern texts, such as McEwan's *Atonement*, as well as a Critics Corner and regular quiz, all reveal Connell's energetic determination to immerse both students and teachers in literature online.

I do like the fact, however, that the original guides are pocket size and still on paper. Announced recently too is The Connell Guides Essay Prize for sixth formers studying literature. The not to be sniffed at prize money of £1000 is clearly an incentive to enter, but I shall be encouraging my students to give it a go for different reasons.

Students should be active participants in their own learning, inspired by the subjects they have chosen to study and challenged to develop their passions independently. By the time they reach sixth form level they should be used to taking responsibility for developing their knowledge further, and not simply because it's what they need to know for an exam. An academic essay prize showcases original arguments and imaginative approaches, helping students to stand out in a university market that increasingly rewards the 'super-curricular', not just the extra-curricular contributions to school life.

The Connell Guides encourage students to do more than simply log key quotes and recite key events. If instead they help to foster a desire to explore the historical, moral and aesthetic questions a great work of literature can provoke, then an English department would be well advised to make the most of them.

Caroline Paice is head of English at Sydenham High School, part of the Girls' Day School Trust.

1914. The fact that 1,200 Shirburnians were to serve, of whom 220 died, is a measure of the enormous contribution made.

What was it like to fight in a battle? At Gallipoli at W Beach, 'the landing was awful – men and officers shot down in shoals, caught in wire – killed, wounded and drowned'; survive this and you faced the impenetrable scrub, for example, at Suvla Bay, 'thick and high, composed of a form of oak-holly which has been described as natural barbed wire'; and then there was the intense heat and swarms of flies.

Eight Shirburnians died on the first day of the Somme. It was the fog, confusion, and noise of battle which were noted, as well as the human pain, 'As long as I live I shall not forget the horror of lifting that poor boy. He died a twitching mass of tautened muscles in our arms as we were carrying him.'

Continued overleaf 

Many of the survivors were to live through great changes. Alan Campbell-Orde (at the School 1912-15) was twice shot down whilst flying Sopwith Camels with the Royal Naval Air Service. Forty years later he retired as a senior executive of BOAC (shortly to become British Airways), having overseen the introduction of the Comet and the Britannia.

Home background had a big influence. Some of those from the prominent county families served in the Yeomanry, effectively the cavalry arm of the Territorial Army. Their accounts provide context for Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*. Many Shirburnians came from clergy and medical families, and so it is no surprise that 20 served in the Chaplain's Department and 75 as doctors and surgeons in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

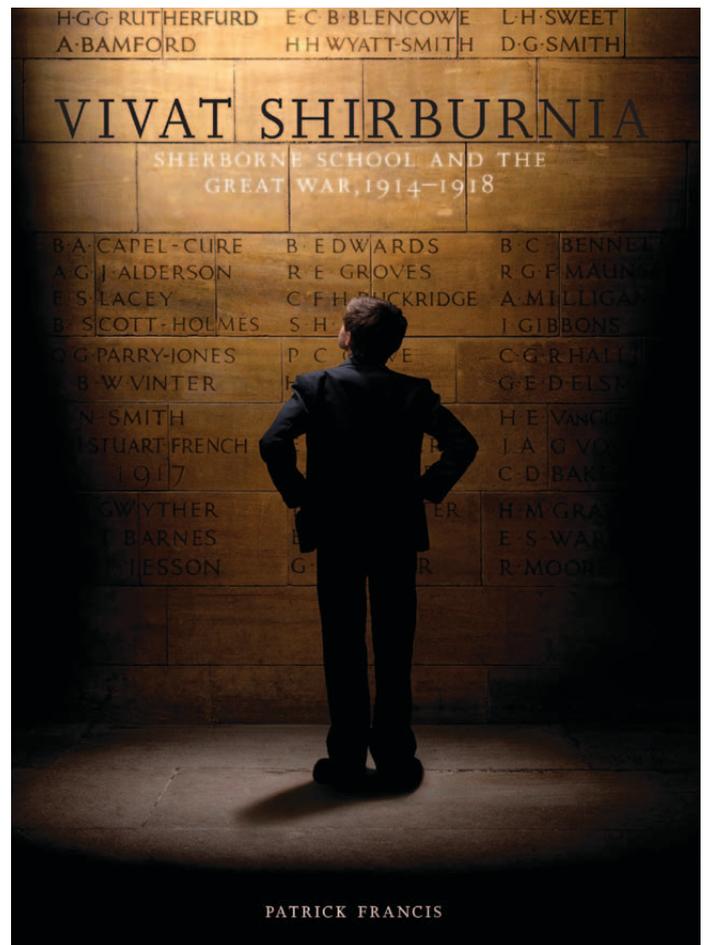
Geoffrey Lunt, later bishop of Salisbury, was a chaplain at Passchendaele, 'I don't want to live today over again, I have laid 14 of my Gunner friends in their last resting place and 23 Infantry who were killed in our Gun Line on their way up to the Front Line, and now I have 37 next-of-kin letters to write.' Most of the doctors then were public school educated, which is no surprise since there were few state schools which could offer the necessary science education. Although capture by the enemy might seem preferable, it created a new set of challenges, as explained in Alec Waugh's book *Prisoner of Mainz*, 'the wearisome sameness of the days, the monotony of the faces, the unchanged landscape, the intolerable talk about the war, all these tended to produce an effect of complete and utter depression. This was far and away our worst enemy; whole days were drenched in an incurable melancholia.' This might have been sub-titled *The Doom of Youth*, for it was Waugh's controversial novel *The Loom of Youth*, closely based on his Sherborne days, that had created so much publicity in 1917.

Life in Sherborne through these dreadful years is recorded in the diaries of a housemaster, H R King. Thirty-seven former members of his house died. Correspondence with those who served was extensive, and many visited the house and school on their brief leave. 'Parry-Jones mi came to stay. Like so many young Englishmen, he seems to anticipate death in this war.' For some, Sherborne seems to have meant more to them than their families.

It is the variety and breadth of the contribution that is so striking. Shirburnians were involved in practically every theatre and aspect of the conflict and through them we learn what happened and how. Every one of the 220 who died is described and accounted for. Today we are not accustomed to having our children die in their 20s. The grief and long term suffering of their families and friends is utterly beyond our comprehension.

Coherently, sensitively and very readably, the author has told the story of the First World War through the eyes of the school community. Well illustrated, not least with the delightful photographs of David Ridgway, and elegantly produced, it is a book to handle and to cherish. It is also an extremely important book with a serious message.

There is clear evidence here of those traditional public school virtues – loyalty, resilience, the capacity to work in teams and to lead them, above all the concept of service – which played such an important part in enabling Britain and her allies to come out on top in this devastating conflict. Despite sniping from some sections of society, those virtues are as important in today's world as they have ever been.



PATRICK FRANCIS

In memoriam.

A further challenge for those boys at Sherborne today, and their teachers, is to do all in their powers in the years to come to ensure that global tensions do not lead to war. Diplomatic failures in the six weeks following the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand on 28th June, 1914, and again at Versailles in the first half of 1919, were to have unimaginable consequences. We need to understand where our enemies, and indeed our friends, are coming from and to develop the capacity to communicate with them.

Young people who have read modern languages, not least Mandarin and Arabic, international relations and modern history at university, have a role to play. So, too, do those in banking and financial services in seeking to raise the level of economic growth in the less developed parts of the world, and thereby to narrow the inequalities which cause so much resentment; as well as scientists who can address the complexities of global warming.

Lofty aims indeed but if the lessons of the Great War are not held constantly in mind, the destruction, horrors and grief of those years so clearly and cogently portrayed by Patrick Francis, will reappear in new and even more dreadful forms.

David Gibbs taught at Sherborne and was Headmaster of Chigwell School.

Vivat Shirburnia (ISBN 978-0-9575405-4-5), published by Impress of London and Oxford, is available from 17th May only from Patrick Francis at Sherborne School, Abbey Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AP or by email pfrancis@sherborne.org

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