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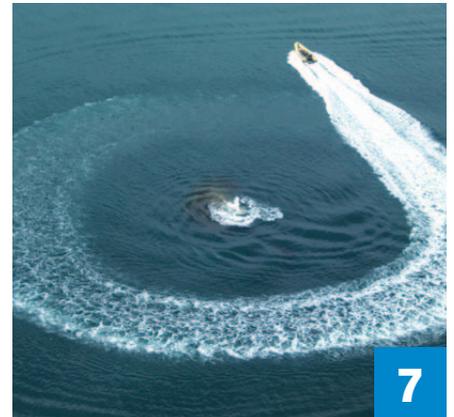
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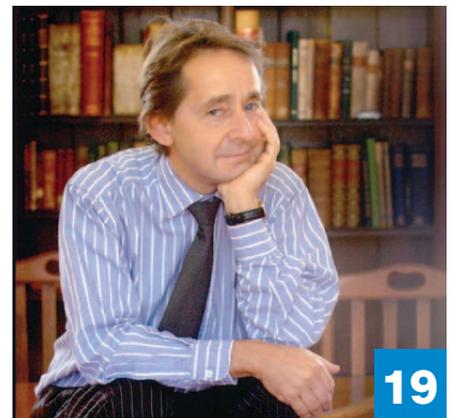
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## Contents

Editorial	5
Letter to the Editor	6
<b>Education</b>	
Defining the spirit of the age, <i>Kevin Stannard</i>	7
That'll teach them – or will it? <i>John Weiner</i>	10
Can Twitter transform teachers? <i>Nick Gallop</i>	13
A bespoke education, <i>Tamara Pearson</i>	15
The housemistress's rap, <i>Sue Dippleman</i>	16
American universities admissions, <i>Rob Harry</i>	34
<b>People</b>	
Body and Soul: Tim Hands, <i>John Newton</i>	17
Sir John Dunford, <i>Bernard Trafford</i>	18
Sir Anthony Seldon, <i>Jane Lunnon</i>	19
New faces, changing places	51
Scottish independence, <i>Patrick Tobin</i>	21
New uniform, by appointment	49
<b>First World War</b>	
A school remembers, <i>Sue Hincks &amp; Philip Britton</i>	23
Promethean women in the Great War, <i>Christopher Martin</i>	26
<b>Abroad</b>	
Overseas Partnerships at Mill Hill, <i>Jane Sanchez</i>	29
Independent education in Zimbabwe, <i>Howard Blackett</i>	32
<b>Sport</b>	
Fit for purpose?	38
Upping the game, <i>Helen Fraser</i>	41
Driving golf forward, <i>David Quin</i>	46
<b>Book reviews</b>	
Thring of Uppingham, <i>David Gibbs</i>	53
Learning in a digitalized age, <i>Alex McGrath</i>	55
<b>Endpiece</b>	
Quick wit, <i>Christopher Martin</i>	58



7



19



29

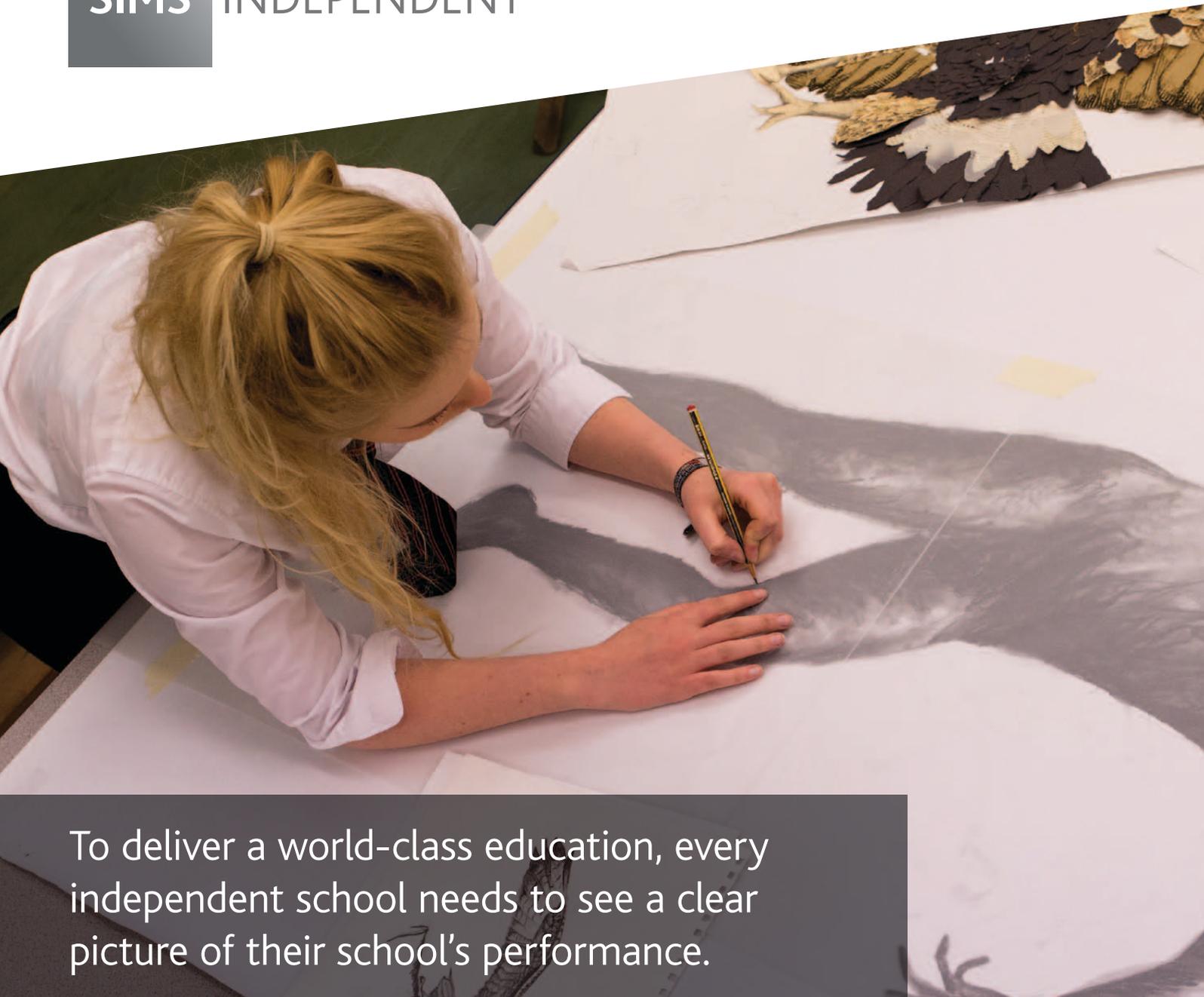


49



*Upping the game.*  
See page 41.

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*Conference & Common Room* is published three times a year, in February, May and September.

ISSN 0265 4458

## Subscriptions:

£25 for a two year subscription, post paid; discounts for bulk orders available.

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Printed in England by  
Micropress Printers,  
Suffolk, IP18 6DH

Is it possible that, when Scotland's First Minister was studying medieval history at St Andrews, he was required to read the works of Fernand Braudel? As Kevin Stannard writes in his article 'Catching the eye, riding the wave, defining the spirit of the age' on page 7, Braudel identified three different time-scales within which change may take effect: short term – day-to-day; medium term – cycles and systems; and long term – structures.

Mr Salmond seems to be working on a 400-year clock. In terms of auguries, he may have outmanoeuvred Mr Cameron (PPE, Oxford) over the timing of the referendum on Scottish Independence. 2014 is a year with unhelpful resonances for the Union. Four hundred years after Bannockburn came the death of the last Stuart monarch, and 400 years further on we may see the death of the Union.

If only the referendum had somehow been delayed until 2015, the unionists could have deployed Agincourt and, more relevantly, Waterloo, where Scots soldiers played a crucial part in destroying the threat of European domination.

The trouble is, shorter timescales are no more encouraging. In 1814 the stirring sounds of *The Star-Spangled Banner* proclaimed that this country would be unable to retrieve the large part of its North American territories lost in the War of Independence, an anthem and a message that resonated well with the France of *La Marseillaise*.

In the first half of 1914, people in the UK were more concerned with Irish and Scottish independence than events in the Balkans. A Scottish Home Rule Bill had reappeared for the 19th time, but it was overshadowed by the threats of violence that lay behind the Irish campaign and, even more disturbingly, the agitation for the enfranchisement of women.

The collapse of old empires is one of the inescapable threnodies generated by the Great War commemorations and we wait to see whether we will escape the prospect of a land frontier returning to this island for the first time since 1707. On page 21 Patrick Tobin is keeping his powder dry.

When the Government declared an amnesty for suffragette prisoners in August 1914, the Women's Social and Political Union, led by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, adopted a 'ceasefire' which held throughout the war. They turned their moral fervour against men not at the front, stigmatising them with white feathers. The Women's Suffrage Federation, led by Sylvia Pankhurst, maintained a militant policy and, thereby, the suffrage movement's high profile. Which group could claim more credit for the limited grant of suffrage enacted in 1918 it is hard to tell.

What is abundantly clear is that women played a crucial part in this country's survival from 1914 to 1918, not only by taking up the jobs left vacant by men deployed to fight, but also by providing ancillary services, often at or near the Front. On page 26 Christopher Martin, who saw national service in the Malaya Emergency, describes some of the experiences that transformed the lives of over five million women. The work they did in factories, on the land and as nurses all over Europe, caused some profound changes of attitude, but not amongst the men who ran the country.

After the war, women were declared 'surplus' and returned to their pre-1914 roles. In the case of married women, this meant a return to the home, but unmarried women, of whom there was a larger than usual number partly because so many of the men killed had been of a 'marrying age', found an unwelcoming job market.

Teaching remained one career in which single women could find their way to the very top. Winifred Holtby was not a teacher, although her most famous heroine, Sarah Burton, most certainly was. "I was born to be a spinster and by God I'm going to spin," this formidable young woman declares in Holtby's novel *South Riding*. Winifred Holtby's epitaph was 'God give me work till my life shall end and life till my work is done'. Her life, alas, was too short, but her work included a regular column for the trade union magazine *The Schoolmistress*.

Other equally powerful women had started an irresistible movement towards a far greater provision of education for girls. The 'reluctant revolutionaries', as they are described by the author of the centenary history of the Association of Headmistresses that they formed in 1874, established independent schools for girls all over the country, schools which required their teachers, including their Head Teachers, to be unmarried.

Continued overleaf 

## Editorial

In 1887, Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham and generally seen as the founder of the Headmasters' Conference, welcomed the Association of Headmistresses to his school, where they were to hold their annual conference at his invitation. He told the 59 Headmistresses in his audience that

the hope of teaching lies in you. You are fresh and enthusiastic, and comparatively untrammelled, whilst we are weighted down by tradition... Are we not ourselves today a sort of parable and a prophecy? Very few years ago how utterly wild the idea would have appeared of this distinguished company of lady teachers meeting in the great schoolroom of this public school during term time.

Thring died only a few months later and Miss Buss, the Conference president that year, was well aware that the visit 'marked a new era in the career of the public schools for girls'. David Gibbs reviews Nigel Richardson's magisterial biography of Thring on page 53.

Helen Fraser, chief executive of the GDST, founded in 1874, observes in her article 'Upping the game' on page 41 that it is remarkable that 'only three institutions are characterised by regimented physical exercise in public at set times, wearing regulation clothing: prisons, the armed forces ... and schools'. On the games field, in the changing room and in the logistical thinking about the management of sport in schools, insufficient thought is given to what will make the participants happy, especially at the margin.

It is vital to distinguish between sport and physical literacy. The latter should be made of easy and attractive access to all, fulfilling, healthy, even challenging, but not competitive. The former is often, to modify Clausewitz, the fulfilment of a school's ambitions by means other than academic. It is nowadays necessary for all schools to undertake comprehensive public relations campaigns to meet the demands required of them by various interest groups in the educational market place.

Sporting success has long been seen as a major weapon in such campaigns, a weapon honed to perfection in the Public Schools. Inter-house rivalry provided a fertile source of a competitive spirit that could be distilled into a liquor of such strength as to befuddle all adversaries. Mr Chowder, one of the housemasters in G F Bradby's *The Lanchester Tradition*, published in 1913\*, was 'blatant in victory, ungenerous in defeat', an adversarial philosophy not unknown today, nor confined to the sports field.

In the days of 'physical education', the inescapable weekly lesson was by no means universally popular and the demands of PE teachers were something to dread. Nevertheless, the theory was, and still is, (to quote the Association for Physical Education), to provide 'the foundation stones for lifelong engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyles.' Such physical activities could be 'informal, recreational or competitive'.

Now the mantle of leadership has passed to 'Directors of Sport' and, although this has probably improved the sporting records and thus the public and especially parental perceptions of schools, unless we are careful, the less talented may neither play for teams nor acquire the physical skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

The alcohol-fuelled complaint of the mother depicted in the *Housemistress's Rap* on page 16, a late-night irruption familiar to anyone who has ever had charge of a boarding house, does have some validity. Such outbursts always did – that was what made them so tricky!

\* *G F Bradby's The Lanchester Tradition was republished in 2003 by John Catt Educational Ltd, from whom copies are available.*

## Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Christopher Martin's 'Quick Wit' article in the last issue of *Conference & Common Room* (Summer 2014) reminded me of my oft experienced inability to 'fashion an apposite retort on the spot' and my consequent envy of those blessed with an ability to respond in every situation with the speed of a rapier. However, just occasionally, there were some delicious moments when the instant retort flowed off the tongue.

One such moment came on the day the A level results were published and James Major, son of the then Prime Minister, was about to collect his results. My PA came into the study (that magnificent room in Kimbolton Castle where Catherine of Aragon died) to say that a reporter from a red top newspaper was demanding to speak to me and wouldn't go away.

I went to confront him in the (even more magnificent) Saloon where he asked me to divulge James's results. Despite his persistence, I made it plain that individual results were confidential to the candidate and were not for general release. He then changed tack and told me that he had already discovered that James had achieved a B in general studies and asked whether that was a good grade?

I drew myself up to my full height and said: "My man, I assume that, as an educational correspondent from a leading national newspaper, you are already fully conversant with the currency of the country's A level grading system." Before he could reply, I turned on my heel, returned to my study and, once the door was closed, shouted "yes!" accompanied by an appropriate gesture.

Yours faithfully,  
Roger Peel  
(Headmaster, Kimbolton School 1987-2002)



*Catching the eye, riding the wave.*

# Defining the spirit of the age

Catching the eye, riding the wave: Kevin Stannard looks at what we do when we innovate in education

School leaders don't lack advice from an ever-growing army of experts in leadership and management, many of whom work tirelessly, and no doubt remuneratively, to translate leadership theories from the world of psychology, business and sport to the world of education. So, in the spirit of seeking out and adapting original sources of inspiration, let's throw in one more.

Step forward Fernand Braudel who, decades after his death, remains a giant among historians not just for his monumental and ground-breaking work on the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II, but for his role in drawing attention to the different time-scales at which change may take effect.

Braudel identified the surface level as that of day-to-day events, reflected today in the 24-hour news cycle, and epitomised by evanescent political swings and roundabouts. The middle level is that of cycles and systems – change taking place over a longer time scale, like a sequence of economic booms and busts.

The third level is that of structures, wherein continuity appears to be the norm, and change is slow but longer-lasting. This would include the environmental stage on which history itself unfolds, and it constitutes what Braudel called the *longue durée*.

*Annalistes* (historians following Braudel and Lucien Febvre and forming the *Annales* school) were interested in this 'deeper' historical level, and some, like Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff, developed the concept of *mentalités* to describe long-lasting collective frames of reference which individuals and communities use to make sense of their world, and to inform their actions. Bear with me!

The *Annalistes* fundamentally preferred the interpretative power of structures to that of events. Their focus was, essentially, on continuity rather than change; and where they did consider change, it was with an eye to the deep-seated, longer-term changes that they saw as resonating through history.

*Continued overleaf* →

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Kevin  
Stannard

And so to school. It strikes me that Braudel's framework can help us order our thoughts when we think about innovation in education.

#### **Catching the eye** through exciting initiatives

On the surface level, there is the eye-catching initiative, calculated to attract positive publicity, to reinvigorate the offer and add icing to an otherwise unchanged curriculum cake. It might involve giving everyone an iPad; bolting on a discrete critical thinking lesson; timetabling Zumba; teaching Year 8 physics in French; ring-fencing time for teaching off-syllabus; running an improv workshop for Oxbridge candidates.

Now these are neither nefarious nor negligible. They're likely to be fun and pupils might even end up learning something. The point is that as single initiatives, each is likely to have only a limited impact.

#### **Riding the wave** through system change

Such initiatives and activities are more likely to gain traction, and have a deeper, more lasting effect, if they are anchored in longer-term 'system' changes – if they effectively ride the wave of current educational change. The introduction of iPads could be supported by staff training, the preparation of new teaching resources, the introduction of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and the mapping of programmes of study against the various educational applications of the device.

Individual curriculum initiatives will resonate if they are part of a wider-ranging review of the curriculum offer. Schools intent on riding the wave of educational thinking are clear that they need to review their curriculum as a whole, and not just tinker at the margins, bolting on eye-catching initiatives.

Another example might be teachers' pay and progression. The surface level of events is represented by the annual pay award (and a big pay hike would certainly catch the eye). A deeper, 'system' level reform might involve a salary review, and perhaps the introduction of performance-related pay. Such a reform would be intended to change the rules of the game for some time to come.

**Defining the spirit of the age** through structures and mind-sets  
But Braudel's perspective might make us look at this slightly differently. Is it possible that, for all their promise of progress and change, system-level initiatives like curriculum and pay reviews could be blunted in their effect through failure to join them up or root them deeply enough?

We might identify a third and deeper level, a level of structures, wherein reside custom, practice and associated mind-sets. It could be argued that deep structural change is only possible if an initiative or reform makes a fundamental impact on practices, by effecting a self-sustaining change in the mind-set of practitioners.

To pick up on our examples: a full curriculum review is one thing, even a shiny new timetable, one that stresses the importance of critical and cross-curricular thinking, for instance. It's quite another to be sure that teachers across the curriculum are linking their lesson content and delivery to the wider curricular aims.

The most successful curriculum reforms occur when the starting point is the spelling out of the skills and dispositions that the school aims to develop, and when individual departments can articulate how they deliver on those wider aims. Critical thinking is most effective when it is promoted in every subject, using the same vocabulary, across the curriculum.

Going beyond the syllabus isn't something to be done for 40 minutes every other Wednesday – it should be a given, lesson by lesson. If curriculum review is a system-level activity, the structural underpinning would be the successful alignment of teaching and learning in support of wider curriculum objectives.

In ICT, eye-catching initiatives like iPads, and system-level changes such as Bring Your Own Device and the introduction of a VLE, will be more sustainable, and more secure in their effects, when they are underpinned at the structural level by infrastructures and practices that embed digitally-enhanced learning across the school and between home and school.

The structural underpinning to a salary review would be a willingness to consider pay in conjunction with conditions of service (not least the amount of non-contact time available for preparation, research and reflection) and professional development opportunities and progression within the classroom. When teacher standards, pay and progression are considered separately, in silos, system change is unlikely to resonate or result in long-term changes in mind-sets. Systems might change, but structures would stay the same.

So there are three linked levels or scales of change: changing activities, changing systems and changing mind-sets. To be effective, short-term change (the eye-catching stuff) must be informed by system change (riding the wave), which in turn should be embedded in structural change – involving the changing of mind-sets as well as practices.

The *Annalists* were most interested in continuity and structures. So should we be. If we're in the business of building schools, setting structures and creating cultures – of defining the spirit of the educational age – let's not forget the *longue durée*.

*Kevin Stannard is director of innovation and learning at the Girls Day School Trust.*



John Weiner

# That'll teach them – or will it?

John Weiner ponders the productivity of punishment

Over the course of my career I have been involved in a number of discussions with colleagues regarding the school's hierarchy of punishments. Some of my peers in previous schools have been firm believers in the effectiveness of detentions and other punishments, although I must admit I am fortunate to be working now somewhere that takes an altogether more holistic view of the rewards, support and sanctions question.

Each time the topic arose, there was much debate about the relative merits of department detentions, gatings, Saturday detentions and so on. With regard to this (and at the risk of being labelled a wishy-washy liberal) it has always seemed to me that if little Jimmy has had a detention every week this year, it is unlikely that detention number 27 is going to be the one that makes him sit up and see the error of his ways like some kind of latter day Saul on the road to Damascus.

And it often seems to be little Jimmy and a few choice chums that regularly crop up on the detentions list, doesn't it? However, whenever I dared ask the question of whether anyone had actually seen a detention cause any positive change in a pupil's behaviour, I was met with lots of knowing smiles and explanations that I had completely misunderstood the point of a school sanction system.

So if it doesn't change behaviour, what is the point? I was once directed to the objectives of punishment. Incarceration? Well, I suppose Jimmy won't be doing anything naughty around school for the hour that he's in detention, but it hardly seems likely to dent the overall crime rates. Retribution? I hope not, although I'm pretty sure that's what Jimmy feels it's all about, judging by the look in his eye.

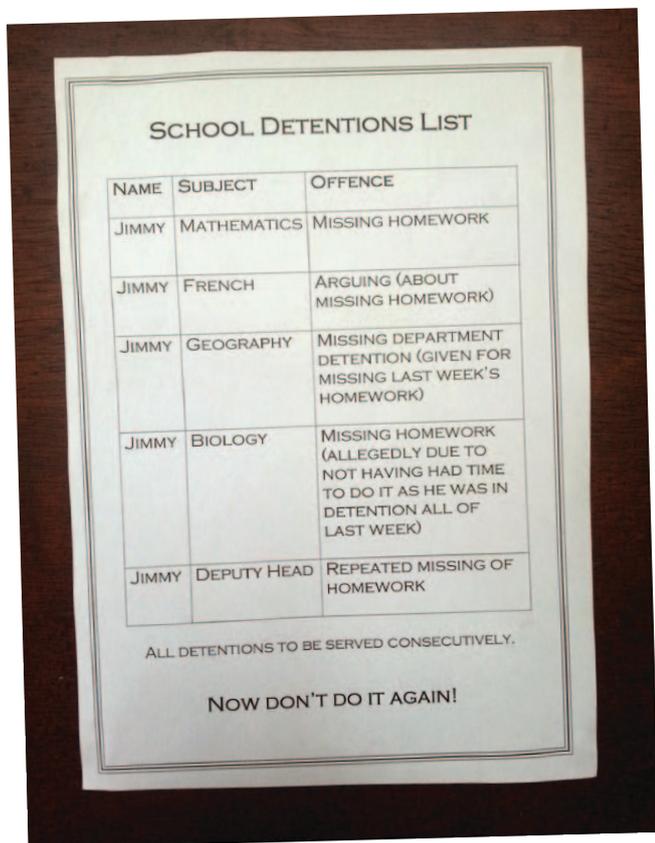
How about deterrence then? This one is more open to debate, although it does presume that misdemeanours around school are rational acts, incorporating a weighing up of the benefits of the act (and it is funny to hide the teacher's whiteboard pen) against the risk of getting caught, multiplied by the expected punishment.

Except kids don't work like that. They are hard-wired to make completely illogical decisions at times, and 95% of the time they have probably not thought at all about whether the heinous crime they are about to commit will have any consequences more than 30 seconds into the future. So that leaves us with rehabilitation, which is exactly the angle I have always tried to argue in staff rooms. If it doesn't change behaviour, what's the point?

But these systems have stood us in good stead over many years, you may point out. Indeed, and the wonderfully archaic names like 'gating' and 'green' in some of my previous schools are testament to that. But we stopped using carbon copiers when times changed and perhaps modern pupils need behavioural systems that meet their needs better than some of our current efforts.

If we are going to change a child's behaviour, we need to understand why they are behaving in that way and help them address it, not bash them again and again for doing it. And, encouragingly, many schools, including my current one, are increasingly emphasising this more supportive area of pastoral care over the more traditional sanctions systems.

Things like reflective exercises, personal action plans, report cards and the like can help pupils to change their own behaviour and empower them to make a difference. To



quote from that cornerstone of educational literature *The Silly Satsuma* by Allan Plenderleith (those with small children will know it): “You’re not a bad boy Eric – you’re a good boy who made bad choices.”

And I believe that. I have never met an inherently ‘bad’ child, although many do get things wrong all too regularly. But, having worked in pastoral roles for a number of years, I am also yet to meet one who does not feel very pleased with themselves when they get it right. So don’t we owe it to them to help them get it right more often, rather than give them another kick when they’ve got it wrong again? Seems a win-win to me.

That said, I don’t think we should dispense with punishment altogether as it has its uses at the extremes. Chewing gum is unlikely to be resolved by an in-depth Freudian analysis of why Jimmy chews gum. So getting him to clean gum off chairs might help to reinforce the message. Maybe. At the other end of the spectrum, if Jimmy’s big brother Franky has hit his maths teacher again, he’s probably got to start looking for a new school, even if we’d all like to hit Franky’s maths teacher sometimes.

But in the middle is where the majority of punishment happens, so the next time you’re about to put Sally in detention for not doing her homework, ask yourself if she deliberately didn’t do the work. Maybe she just forgot again. Perhaps sitting with you for 20 minutes showing her how to set reminders on the calendar app on her smartphone will improve things ten times more than a lunchtime detention would and make her see that you’re on her side, to boot.

From this perspective, it is encouraging to see the growth of mentoring and buddying systems, to offer an arm round the

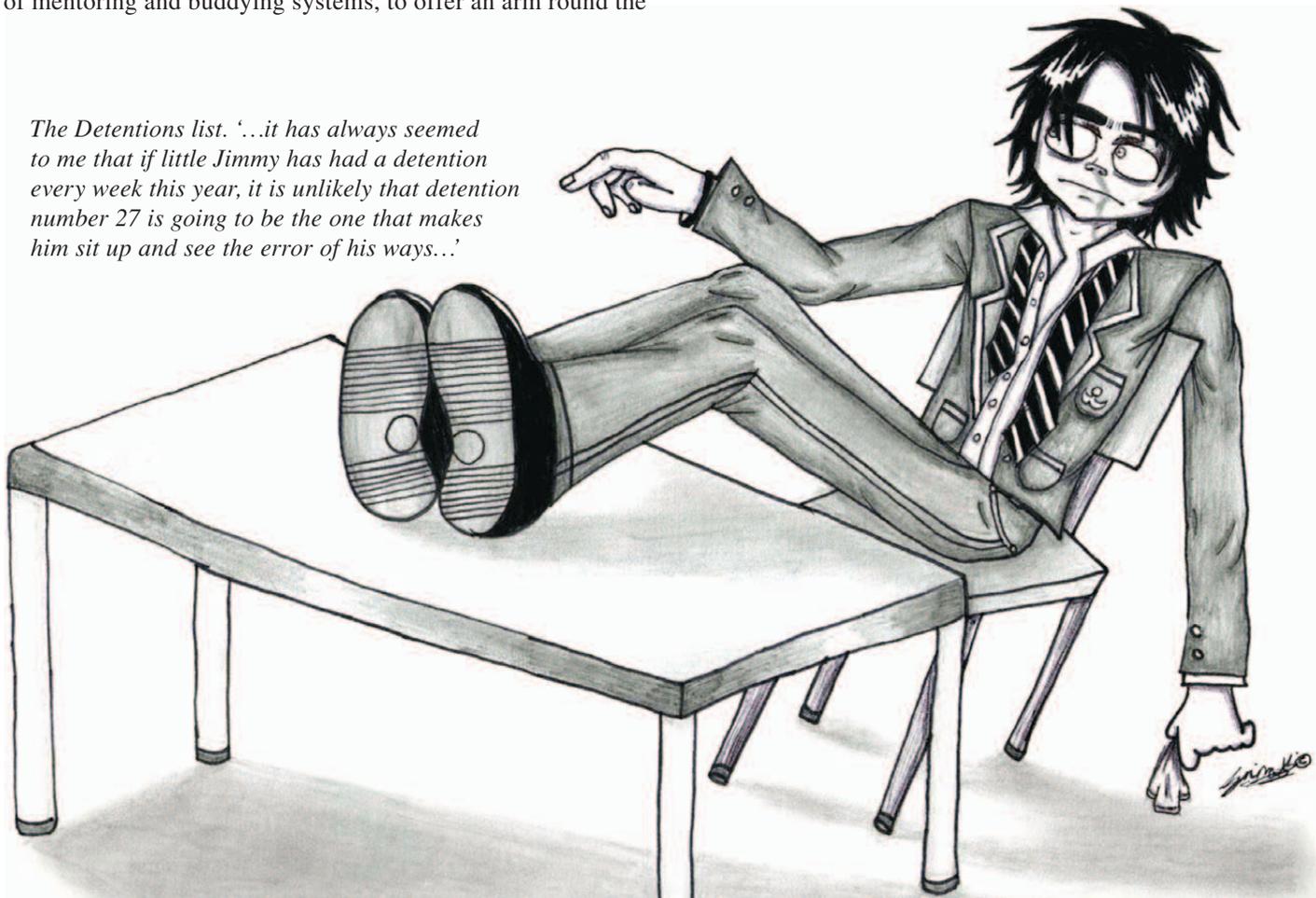
shoulder to pupils who are finding life tough academically or pastorally. These programmes can quickly become a part of the school culture and move beyond the realms of proactively helping the few to have an immensely positive effect on whole cohorts, as has been the case with the award-winning ‘study buddy’ programme at Caterham.

But here’s the crunch. Even if you subscribe to the above views and believe that positivity and support are more effective learning tools than the harder edge of a sanctions system, it can be hard to let go. Is it possible that the pupils behave well because of the systems in place, ready to catch them when they step out of line? Could we be only a hair’s breadth away from student anarchy, with the school rules being the thin blue line protecting us from revolution?

But let’s face it: kids are generally a pretty decent bunch and if you’re fair with them and treat them with respect, they’ll do the same to you. Of course they get it wrong every now and then, as do you, I and everyone else. But we are here as teachers and educators, not policemen and judges, so the more we can do to educate pastorally as well as we educate academically the better, in my book. And if I’m wrong? Well, I suppose we could bring back the cane... That would make Jimmy think twice before turning up late to my lesson again.

*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](http://smtspy.blogspot.co.uk)).*

*The Detentions list. ‘...it has always seemed to me that if little Jimmy has had a detention every week this year, it is unlikely that detention number 27 is going to be the one that makes him sit up and see the error of his ways...’*



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# Can Twitter transform teachers?

Social media may be revolutionising the classroom, but does it have the power to transform professional development too, asks Nick Gallop



Nick Gallop

Have you ever wondered what the people behind 24-hour television newsreaders are actually doing, intent upon their keyboards, bathed in artificial screen-glow?

The vast majority are engaged in activities that didn't exist a few years ago. They are working within corporate social media teams and their roles range from uploading internet content, linking online news channels, updating network profiles, moderating comments, responding to messages, managing Twitter feeds, developing audiences and repairing on-line reputational damage.

The rapid rise of this phenomenon – the social media team – reflects a new and determined commercial route taken by major corporations which have recognised the need to be ultra responsive to prevailing moods and trends. They are operating on a level of social sensitivity unmatched by governments or traditional institutions that remain regularly wrong-footed by revolutions in the way that people communicate.

It is now a decade since the launch of Facebook in the autumn of 2004 and eight years since Twitter, the innovative micro-blogging platform, was founded. For most of that time, whilst their connective power has been a global phenomenon – in the spring of 2014 the number of Facebook users passed a billion – their capacity to initiate and sustain genuine transformational change on a significant social or political level had been in some doubt.

Perceptions that social media networks were merely faddish pastimes were challenged in 2011 when the Arab Spring saw tens of thousands of Twitter and Facebook users sharing unprecedented levels of accurate and uncensored information, circumventing state-sponsored media channels for the first time, to link political activists and other previously underground groups.

In the same year, the orchestration of the urban riots in the UK was conducted largely through social media. Whilst information on locations ripe for plunder was spread by Blackberry messaging and Twitter, just as spontaneously the @RiotCleanup Twitter feed mobilised its 50,000 followers to clean up the resulting mess. Where revolutionaries and chaotic teenagers beat a path, establishment figures, from prime ministers to presidents, soon follow.

Nowadays, most schools have Facebook profiles and Twitter feeds, used in the main to keep parents and alumni up to date with news and events and to steer social media traffic towards their more orthodox websites. Similarly, within schools, many academic or pastoral units have a growing social media presence, using a variety of networks to communicate with their tech-savvy students.

Inside and outside the classroom, social media has proved itself to have the power to engage students in different and innovative ways and to connect them to much wider networks,

adding depth and richness to their learning. Platforms can connect multimedia resources – such as Youtube or Vine – collating and cohering information in particular topic areas as never before. The educational content of recognised 'hashtags' can be vast, as well as providing alternative ways of learning, for instance through quick-fire quizzes or epistemic role-playing games (#gbl – for game based learning).

In higher education, a similar shift towards social media and away from 'traditional' communication has occurred. In the summer of 2014, heralded by headlines that 'the age of email is over', Exeter University revealed what many others already knew – that the majority of its faculty communications with and between staff and student groups had shifted to social media, matched by a similar shift in staffing provision.

The benefits of the immediacy of modes of communication like Twitter were cited, as well as the 'slow pace' of email – caused mainly by the reluctance of student populations to engage with it.

But aside from connecting parents, pupils or students, what power does social media hold for professional practice and development? Does it really have the capacity to change the way that we engage with other colleagues and with our profession?

When Mark Twain wrote 'I didn't have time to write a short letter so I wrote a long one instead' he might have been championing the mission statement of Twitter – the strength of which lies in its succinctness and its topicality.

Twitter's essential value is its ethos of openness and transparency, and at its core are tenets that lie at the heart of the teaching profession – sharing, collaborating, connecting, participating and engaging – in defiance of the isolation and remoteness experienced by many teachers.

However, it is precisely this level of openness that sees social media, in particular Twitter, come in for its most stinging criticism. For many, social networks peddle activities that range from the pointlessly inane to the deeply harmful, in the form of unsubstantiated rumour and gossip. The anonymity offered transgresses privacy, data protection and copyright legislation.

Social networks have a track record of reducing complex and sensitive issues to levels of superficiality, whilst elevating trivial ones to heightened prominence – all steered by the questionable collective intellect of the prevailing twittering masses. For instance, over several weeks earlier this year, the top two trending topics alternated between harrowing stories of Syrian atrocities and 'hilarious' videos of hamsters eating burritos.

Additionally, the *real* impact of social media in support of insurgent activity has been questioned. The importance of Facebook and Twitter is often championed loudest by journalists who are heavily reliant on them. In states like

## Education

Egypt, Libya and Syria, these means of communication remain the preserve of the liberal, literate elite, in stark contrast to the movement's genuine powerbase whose grassroots supporters are almost exclusively reliant on cable television.

In fact, far from facilitating the liberation of oppressed masses, Twitter, Youtube and Facebook have all been manipulated by dissident groups that recognise the value of sophisticated and relentless social media strategies in gaining support and in legitimising political or territorial claims.

So, whilst there are bound to be caveats – not least that self-appointed experts are unencumbered by the inconvenient need to back up their 140-character claims with actual evidence – there are significant and valuable benefits too.

Indeed, a focus upon the impact of Twitter on professional development provides an interesting case in point.

First, Twitter's hashtags enable the organisation and collation of information within discrete topic areas, making

staying up to date in areas of professional interest remarkably easy. Twitter hashtags are both sortable, through Apps like Tweetdeck, and searchable. Examples include #edchat, #elearning and #edtech each one alive with the latest ideas, links and suggestions from educators around the world.

More specialised areas such as #bullying, #gtlearning, #ipaded and the latest digital learning information at #CDL\_MoocEd are matched by subject-based ones like #engchat and provide effective forums for staying current.

Secondly, a key strength is that Twitter can provide a convenient micro-blogging 'front' to flag links to more detailed blogs, steering interested and like-minded practitioners towards effective collaboration. For example, Headteacher Tom Sherrington (@headguruteacher) began an initiative for disseminating and evaluating curriculum models in June 2014 and Christopher Waugh (@Edutronic\_net) hosts #blogsync with encouragement to contribute to open conversations

## HERE & THERE

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### Girls Go Gold at Bolton School

Bolton School is delighted to host this year's North of England Girls' School Association (GSA) Girls Go Gold Conference on Thursday, 18th September. In what promises to be a motivating and thought-provoking day, there will be two nationally renowned keynote speakers: rower Helen Glover MBE, who is the reigning World and Olympic champion in the women's coxless pairs; and Jenny Meadows, the current European Indoor Champion at 800m and third fastest British woman over this distance.

The overarching theme for the day will be 'Where sport can take you' and speakers and workshops will illustrate the many career paths in sport.

Tracey Neville, who competed for England in two Commonwealth Games, will run a netball workshop; Victoria Cotton, BBC Sport Producer, will talk about TV sports production; and Sonia Oxley of Reuters will present on sports journalism. There will be four practical sessions run by university staff on sports and biomechanics testing, sports intervention, sports rehab and physiotherapy and a seminar on podiatry led by Dr Lindsay Hill.

A number of university sports departments will be in attendance, including Loughborough, Liverpool John Moores, Chester, Bolton, UCLAN, Liverpool Hope and Edge Hill. Courtesy of Sporting Chance USA, girls will also have the opportunity to learn about overseas sports placements as an alternative pathway to develop both academic and sports scholarship opportunities in the USA.

The day is designed to inspire girls from independent schools across the country to believe that anything is possible with the right mental attitude and lots of hard work to develop their talent.



*Helen Glover*



*Jenny Meadows*

on topics such as measuring progress and performance management.

Thirdly, Twitter provides an effective platform for sharing educational research. John Tomsett (@johntomsett) aims to improve educational systems by developing and encouraging evidence evaluation in order 'to increase the influence of educational research on students' outcomes in our schools'.

Twitter feeds which support blogs – from the mainstream Institute of Education (@IOE\_London) to the more alternative Pragmatic Education (@joe\_Kirby) and The Echo Chamber (@TheEchoChamber2) – provide content that ranges from interesting opinion and authoritative analysis to evaluation of many online digital classroom resources such as Socrative, Edmodo and GoNoodle.

Finally, Twitter also offers opportunities for self-reflection on teaching and professional practice. It supports innumerable personal learning networks (PLNs) that provide forums for further interaction and learning and is a facility for teachers to share experiences, to pause and to reflect on their own

practice. And for some, with the courage to participate by contributing reflections for both wider dissemination and the benefit of others, it offers the medium in which to do so.

How many school leaders know the extent to which their academic and pastoral departments are utilising social media for professional development? How unreasonable would it be for professional development purse-holders in schools to expect a significant level of engagement in the possibilities offered by social media networks before more conventional provision is followed?

The frustrations that often exist with conventional INSET provision are widely documented – mainly that the expense and inconvenience incurred rarely align with tangible benefits to teaching and learning. Twitter is by no means a panacea, but ignoring its possibilities increasingly smacks of the elderly relative who feared and rejected the mystical powers of the television remote control.

*Nick Gallop is an assistant head and head of sixth form at The Portsmouth Grammar School.*

# A bespoke education

Ladies Day at The Boys' Club is not for Tamara Pearson's daughter

The author Peter Mayle once wrote that one of the items most coveted by the man about town was 'a pair of hand-cut, hand-stitched, hand-built shoes, created solely for the very personal idiosyncrasies of toes and contusions and bony out-toppings that make up the unique gentlemanly foot.'

These words, from an old boy of a school I attended myself, resonated profoundly as, over the years, I have learnt that things designed for purpose, bespoke to the customer, are far more desirable than anything off the peg. In times of financial hardship, corners can be cut in all sectors, resulting in homogenised products which lack any personal touch.

The education sector is no exception. With some schools employing executive senior leadership without teaching experience, it is becoming increasingly apparent that there are establishments whose business plan comes before their teaching and learning. Educational visionaries of the Victorian era have seen their legacies unravelled to allow for the economic conditions of our time.

My own parents worked extremely hard to move me from an inner-London state school to public school in Sussex. It was a time when many of the sprawling flint and red brick campuses were feeling the pressure of dwindling numbers and had reluctantly begun 'allowing' girls into their sixth forms.

Within a few years, many traditional boys' schools became fully co-educational – a transition perhaps born more out of financial pressure than to provide any educational benefit. It is, after all, the case that research shows that boys benefit from co-education, whereas girls flourish in single-sex education.

All the things I've heard people say about being a new parent have certainly come true for me in recent months. Since the birth of our daughter in April, the overwhelming emotions, the sense of love, the responsibility and the desire to provide

the best for her have been profound. It has inevitably made me think about the future path I intend my daughter to follow.

For example, at Burgess Hill School for Girls, girls are welcomed and celebrated every day, as they always have been. There is no doubt that girls learn differently and single sex schools are experts in catering to this. Unspoken gender stereotypes and boundaries cease to exist and girls are free to thrive in STEM subjects, creative arts, sports and personal development. Those uncomfortable, self-conscious years where co-education can provide its own challenges are by-passed, allowing girls to capitalise on all aspects of school life.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have benefitted from an independent education. However, as a girl who was 'allowed' to attend former boys' schools, I could not shrug off that overarching feeling that it was purely Ladies Day at The Boys' Club. Traditions, activities and curriculum were all passed down from the founding fathers of these establishments. The subtleties of school ethos play an enormous part in the experience had by each child.

As a lover of shoes, I find myself agreeing with Peter Mayle's observation about bespoke footwear. As a professional educator and, more so now, as a parent, I cannot ignore the benefit of a truly tailored, built-for-purpose education for my daughter.

*Tamara Pearson is deputy head of the junior school at Burgess Hill School for Girls.*



*Tamara Pearson*

# The housemistress's rap

Pinot fuelled in the middle of the night,  
 Ranting, raving, picking a fight:  
 'Don't mean to complain', the email starts,  
 'But, watch out, I'm going to pour out my heart!  
 It's a pity Delilah wasn't picked for the Firsts,  
 She was Captain of everything at dear St Gerts.  
 Sporty, a prefect, virtuoso musician,  
 Charity runner and girl in charge of fishing.  
 An Oxbridge scholar she was reckoned (in the making)  
 And she's Michelin starred when it comes to cupcake baking.  
 You've overlooked her again and again  
 Her dreams are crushed, her confidence wanes.  
 Why hasn't she been made the next Head of School?  
 That prejudiced Vice Principal must be a fool!  
 And I hear Mr Jones gave her a Friday detention –  
 He clearly has no powers of invention.  
 I know she was late and her prep was unclear  
 But she really didn't mean to bite Sophie's left ear.  
 But please don't tell her that I've been in touch –  
 I want you to manage this all on the hush.  
 Oh, and also, last week she lost a pink jumper  
 And I think her boyfriend is going to dump her.  
 You must do something to make it all better.  
 And I expect you to find that cashmere sweater.'

So, I think to myself, how I should reply?  
 Hands hover over keyboard, I fetch a deep sigh.  
 'Mrs Smith, it's best not to mix emails with wine –  
 Did Mr Smith yet again not come home on time?  
 He's working late and there's an empty nest  
 And you really want to get quite a lot off your chest.  
 I understand – Delilah's far from home  
 And whenever she decides she's going to pick up the  
 phone  
 She wants to offload the worries of the day,  
 To share her troubles and then hear someone to say  
 "I understand. There, there, don't fret"  
 Not, "I'm about to take off in the private jet.  
 What's that darling? I can't really hear you!  
 I'm sure I told you that we're off to Machu Picchu."  
 But we're here for her and we're here for you,  
 Just give us a break, since we really, really do  
 Know what we are doing and we know your daugh-  
 -ter feels that school is a time to explore.  
 Put down the iPad, don't type in a bate –  
 We've learned to be cautious with emails that late.  
 We're experienced and understand family relations.  
 Perhaps I should apply to chair the United Nations.

*Sue Dippleman is a boarding school housemistress.*



*Michelin starred cupcakes?*

# Body and Soul

Dear Colleague

Thank you for volunteering to be part of the Body and Soul series.

The aim of the exercise is to give an insight into the life of Heads. You are a fascinating lot and that should be celebrated.

The questionnaire is below. As I explained, please give pithy responses, with as few subordinate clauses as possible, to the questions. Please download this, fill it in electronically, and return to [john.newton@tauntonschool.co.uk](mailto:john.newton@tauntonschool.co.uk)

Do not feel you should compromise yourself in any way. If you are uncomfortable with a question because I am trespassing on sensitive terrain, please indicate and I will omit both question and response.

On the other hand, wit is always welcome.

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

Tim Hands, Master of Magdalen College School since January 2008; before that Head of Portsmouth Grammar School for ten years, and chairman of HMC for the academic year 2013/2014.

## 2. The working day:

### Do you start early or go late? Why?

Boarding habits die hard. Taking over a boarding house, I discovered the inmates were likely to misbehave late, but rarely to rise early. So the study door was never open before 8am, nor me working behind it. The habit has stuck.

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

The desk is a sea and my PA tells me sometimes the floor becomes the Roaring Forties.

### Give two key principles about how you manage time.

Badly, because I always underestimate how long a task will take.

### When the pressure is on do you:

*Take a bath*

*Take a walk*

*Take a pill*

*Other (please specify).*

Put on Mozart: Piano Concerto number 20 in C major, Piano Concerto number 22 in E flat major, or Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat major. Mozart told his father the last of these was his finest work. So it usually does the trick.

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

Talk it out to a wonderful wife.

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

There are two precious objects: a cheque signed by I K Brunel, and a picture signed by the violinist David Oistrakh. Great people both.

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

Slave to a tyrannous oligarchic iPhone.



John Newton

## 3. Nurturing the mind

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

*The Times*. Front-page first, then read the sport from the back.

### What sort of literature do you read in the term?

The inbox by day, and a guidebook to Ireland at night.

### And the holidays?

A Martin Gilbert volume on Churchill each summer holiday as the one staple ingredient. The Gallipoli or Battle of Britain volumes are the best guide to putting the pygmy problems of a school into perspective.

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

Five years in London allowed me to go to the theatre at least once a week. Since leaving London, I've got feeble. So CDs are my chief artsy recreation: I sometimes try to do things in cycles: all the Haydn symphonies, or all the Bach cantatas, in sequence, are two of the best experiences in recent years.

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

Jane gave me Sky for my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Watching the cricket and rugby are some of our best moments as a family.

### You are given a six month sabbatical to write a book. What would it be about?

A Shakespeare comedy or history – and it would take me an awful lot longer than six months.

## 4. Feeding the soul...

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

That's a very personal question. In Portsmouth, I was closely associated with the Cathedral, as a bishop's representative on the Council and as a Trustee. Chapel happens every day of the week at Magdalen, and I speak twice a term. It usually takes me about six hours to write 750 words. What I've been saying has been getting more and more clichéd, so I gave myself half a term off, and tried to write about the Trinity. It fell on St Patrick's Day, which made things a bit easier.

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

I once worked for Christian Aid. Since then, I've done most with cancer charities. But I don't do nearly enough.

Continued overleaf →

## People

### 5. Training the body

#### Do you get your five-a-day?

Yes.

#### How often do you exercise? What do you do?

My scary and expert GP told me five years ago that if President Obama managed half-an-hour's exercise a day there wasn't any excuse for me not doing the same. So, to the astonishment of everyone, I self-assembled an exercise bike and joined a gym. But plenty of vices and bad habits remain.

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

At Portsmouth, the wonderful chairman of the finance committee was managing director of Brittany Ferries. He told us we would go further south in France each year, until the boys were in the sixth form, when we would try Spain, and after that would end up in Italy. Prophetic. But apparently, that's what everyone does.

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

*Have a massage*

*Have a sauna*

*Have a posh meal*

*Have a weekend by the sea.*

Yes please: at Brighton, preceded by cricket at Hove; at Yarmouth, preceded by the crossing from Lymington; or at Deal, preceded by a walk along the White Cliffs. Spot the southerner: sorry.

### 6. Relationships

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

Byron.

#### Who has been the key influence on your life?

That's easy: my parents. My father is still alive aged 95, and I speak to him most evenings. I think he was probably a tremendous Headmaster, in pretty impossible circumstances. He left the independent sector in the end, to run one of the country's largest comprehensives. It nearly killed him. I'm really lucky not to have had similar political impediments to



Tim Hands

educating young people the way he and I think best, which is looking after their happiness first and their success second.

My mother was completely devoted to young people being happy, and to the GDST. Both my parents were devoted to bettering education. They never talked about it. They just got on and did it. My father completely disapproves of my charring HMC. My mother would have loved it.

#### To whom would you most like to give a piece of your mind?

I wouldn't wish the conversation to be aggressive! But I would like to have a discussion with Michael Gove in order to ascertain how much he realises any downsides of what he is doing and the pace he's been doing it at.

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

I've always wanted to work in an enormous kitchen feeding 1000 people or similar. Every third year, the common room has to go and do something else for the day. Courtesy of Sodexo, I shall at last this year be fulfilling that ambition.

#### Thank you for taking the time.

## Sir John Dunford

### 'Arise, Sir John: your profession salutes you'

My first encounter with John Dunford was two decades ago. He was President of the Secondary Heads Association (SHA), while still head of Durham Johnston School. A very young Head, I'd been asked to represent HMC on SHA's council. I travelled to Reading knowing no one – and was immediately welcomed by John who, despite the hectic nature of his role at the quarterly council meetings, put me at my ease, looked after me and found me a place at his table for dinner.

Nothing much changed after that! Or, rather, although a great deal changed, he remained the same, as did our firm friendship.

John left his school and became General Secretary of SHA, following John Sutton. Under his leadership membership expanded. Structures were reorganised so that, instead of having delegates from the independent sector and other groupings, their representatives were elected like everyone else. SHA became more efficient, effective and democratic.

The name changed, too: the word 'Heads' was narrowing, so Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) was devised.

None of this happened easily: school leaders are as resistant to change as they find their teachers are back in their own schools and colleges. National changes also impacted on the membership. I remember John reminding council very firmly that the Association was for school and college leaders,



Sir John  
Dunford

whatever the status of their institution. As Grant Maintained leaders had been welcomed, so later were heads of Specialist Schools and, more recently, Academies.

John led SHA/ASCL through some of education's most turbulent years. His annual conference speeches were a treat, taking Secretaries of State to task and memorably complaining that he had dealt with nine of them in ten years: how, he asked, could there be stability in education when that key post was merely a stepping-stone to higher political office?

John is a master pragmatist: that didn't always please members who would call for action, demanding confrontation

with government lunacies! Patiently John would remind us that governments of whatever complexion are petulant: upset them, and they slam the door on you. Firmly, persuasively and with the assurance of one who time after time got results for the Association and for education generally, John would chart a pragmatic and effective course for the Association, and for school leaders all over England and Wales.

Eventually John had to retire. Did he disappear into obscurity? Of course not. He still pops up on all kinds of educational bodies, and is founder chair of Whole Education. More recently he has become government's Pupil Premium champion, spreading the word (rather more effectively than the politicians do!) on how that funding should be best used. Never instructing, he encourages, advises, supports.

That's the hallmark of the man. So now, appropriately, he has this richly deserved honour: but I'm quite sure he won't disappear for a long time yet. I hope he won't: we need him. School leaders, schools, pupils and politicians owe John a great debt of gratitude.

Arise, Sir John: your profession salutes you.

*Bernard Trafford is Headmaster of The Royal Grammar School Newcastle.*

[A personal note from the Editor. Just as Bernard began to get to know John at a dinner table, so did I. He knows his hospitable way round menus, wine lists and restaurants all over Europe, although, unlike some of us, he does not betray this in his appearance. He is immensely good company and seems to have crystallised from his rewarding two-way relationships with skilled, committed and responsive colleagues, the contemporary equivalent of the Philosopher's Stone, which renders the balance of his work and his life happily golden.]

## Sir Anthony Seldon

*'Planet Seldon is a universe where all things, however contradictory, are possible'*

"How long will it be before I make you cry?" Anthony Seldon posed this memorable question to me at one of my induction meetings, a few months before I started as his new deputy head.

The obvious come-back, "just after I've made you cry," only occurred to me days later. Instead, I think I spluttered vaguely about resilience and professionalism, painfully aware that I was already failing the 'candid and authentic communication' test, and also, frankly, wondering what on earth I had got myself into.

Four years and a professional lifetime later, I still wonder. Being Anthony's deputy is a cross between being in the Kubla Khan pleasure dome and a relentless boot camp. Planet Seldon is a universe where all things, however contradictory, are possible.

Anthony's capacity to rise above limiting details like time, space, resource or available energy, is legendary. He is a Head who works every day more hours than there actually are, but still passionately advocates wellbeing, balance and stillness.

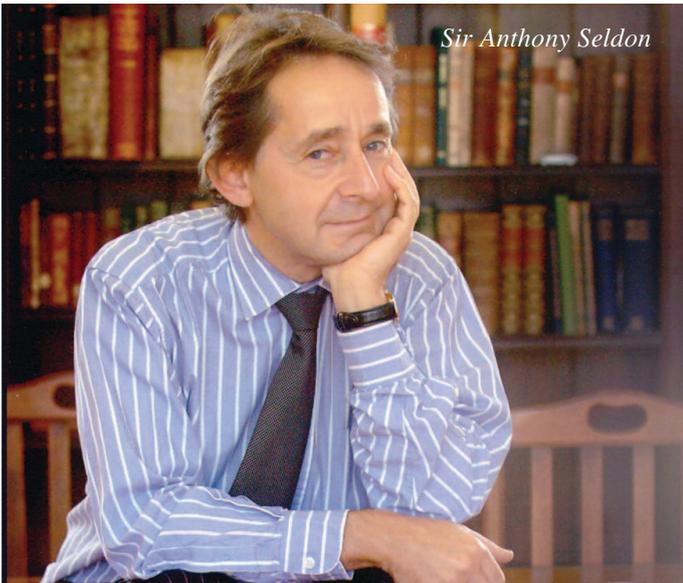
He is this century's most high profile, influential and widely recognised Head Teacher, privy to the inner workings of

Prime Ministers and Presidents and yet still to be seen in every Wellington classroom, concert hall and touchline. I have worked for some wonderful Heads but I have never worked for one more omnipresent.

He is exacting and demanding and yet he is painstakingly and extraordinarily kind. Anyone who has received one of his trademark hand-written letters, always sloping right off the page – he is impatient of all boundaries – but always compassionate, gracious and vivid, will testify to that. He is widely admired and respected by those who work for him and pupils and parents simply love him.

Anthony is not just a very good Head but a man of many parts. Schoolmaster, historian, political commentator and author of over 40 books; co-founder and director of the Centre for Contemporary British History and Action for Happiness; governor of numerous educational bodies and charities, including the Royal Shakespeare Company; historical adviser to 10 Downing Street and member of the First World War Culture Committee... everywhere you turn, you see Anthony's vitality, imagination and leadership in evidence.

No wonder that he was knighted this year for services to education and modern political history. Perhaps most worthy of citation is his passionate and tireless campaign to bridge the



*Sir Anthony Seldon*

divide between the state and independent sectors, epitomised by the founding in 2010 of the Wellington Academy of which he is now executive principal.

The list of what Anthony has done at Wellington is exhausting to read: making it co-ed, introducing the IB, establishing happiness lessons, institutionalising holistic education with the eight aptitude model, promoting active learning through 'Harkness' teaching, introducing Mandarin, championing digital libraries, convening numerous conferences (including the hugely successful annual Education Festival), overseeing the building of Wellington international schools in China. Just these selected highlights make one breathless.

Anthony Seldon thinks what no-one else has yet got round to thinking and then finds a way to make it happen. This has been described as vision, but it feels like a kind of magic to me. For all that his slightly un-nerving twinkle has led to comparisons with Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, Gandalf, the

last of the wizards in *The Lord of the Rings*, is a better fit.

He is irascible, impatient with folly, outspoken and clearly engaged in a fight against the agents of educational darkness, the complacent 'wazzocks' bogged down in operational or predictable thinking. But, at the same time, he is the visionary who really 'gets it': who can see into the heart of things, work out what needs doing and then find the people to do it. His genius is not just about having shockingly good ideas, it's about his capacity to persuade others to follow him and find themselves doing things they never thought they could or would.

He simply assumes we can all do it – and we do. We follow him not just because he has courage and imagination but because he is passionately motivated by a deeply held desire to change things for the better. Anthony fights for the under-dog, and whilst it may seem ironic to be doing so from the immensely privileged position of Master of Wellington College, he knows that it is this position that gives him the power and influence he needs to make a real difference.

He has not done any of this alone. Throughout his remarkable career the other Dr Seldon, his wife Joanna, wise, kind, modest and formidably clever, has been the still point of his turning world. She teaches English, leads creative writing and offers endless hospitality and generosity in their permanently open home.

She is the epitome of grace. They have not had it easy in the last few years, but their response to adversity has showed the most enormous, admirable and courageous dignity. She richly deserves the accolade alongside him.

All those who work in Wellington feel part of a mission, not just a school. We know we are lucky to have been part of it, working for Anthony, at this time, in this place. And will he make me cry? Well, he hasn't yet. But as the extraordinary, nail-biting and transformative privilege of being Sir Anthony Seldon's deputy draws to a close, I just might!

*Jane Lunnon became Head of Wimbledon High School (GDST) in September 2014.*

## HERE & THERE

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### Bromsgrove Observatory opened

Gazing at the stars is set to become one of the lessons at Bromsgrove School from September, with the opening of The Matthew Taylor Observatory.

Through the generosity of one of its former pupils, Bromsgrove School has constructed the building, complete with dome and two telescopes, to allow GCSE, A level and IB students to take part in astronomy projects at any time of the day or night. GCSE Astronomy is being launched as an option in September, with new Year 9 pupils being the first to test out the Observatory, which is housed on the Prep School site.

Old Bromsgrovian Matthew Taylor (Walters 1968-1973) generously donated the funds for the Observatory and its equipment. During his time at the school, Matthew was secretary of the Astronomical Society and the project is very close to his heart.



*Headmaster Chris Edwards (left) with Matthew Taylor.*

# Scottish independence

A personal reflection by Patrick Tobin

*A land frontier again after 300 years?*

A century after 1914 there is the eerie feeling of having been there before. Then a war of five empires would end in the dissolution of four, the detachment of most of Ireland from the United Kingdom and the shaping of new national identities – ‘Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold!’

Will the centre be better able now to prevent dissolution – in Ukraine? In Europe? In Britain? The last question, whether or not to secede from the kingdom united in 1707, has been handed to Scottish residents to decide.

The joining of the Crowns in 1603 had seemed to draw a line under a bloody chapter in Scottish history – Flodden, Solway Moss, Pinkie, not to mention a Scottish queen beheaded on her English cousin’s warrant – but by 1707 Queen Anne’s failure to bear an heir was giving heart to ‘Jacobites’ desiring the restoration of the main Stuart line overthrown in 1688.

The Act of Union was the hard-headed decision by the Scottish Protestant establishment that fuller unity with England was a price worth paying to keep Catholic ‘James III’ off the throne. For the next 30 years the Jacobite cause would flicker and surge, before Culloden finally decided the matter.

Many Scots embraced the wider world opened to them by the Union. Dr Johnson soon quipped that the happiest sight to greet a Scotsman was the road which led to England. In the *North Briton* John Wilkes mercilessly satirised the Marquess of Bute, the first of a line of Scottish Prime Ministers, through Aberdeen, Campbell Bannerman, Bonar Law, Ramsay Macdonald and Douglas-Home to Gordon Brown.

The 18th century was a golden age within Scotland: the philosophical, medical and scientific legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment; the renown of Scottish universities and schools; the civic grandeur of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Scottish inventors were central to the Industrial Revolution.

Union would have an uglier aftermath – the brutal suppression that followed the failure of the ‘45’. Walter Scott would sanitise Culloden through his Waverley novels and in the grotesque spectacle of a Hanoverian Prince Regent clad in tartan and tights, but the Highland Clearances would complete the destruction of a culture.

Nor were misery and privation confined to the Highlands. Scots toast the ‘immortal memory’ of Robert Burns and piously incant ‘A Man’s A Man For A’ That’, but life in the Scottish Borders in 1795 fell far short of his ideal that ‘Sense and Worth... Shall bear the gree, and a’ that.’

Robert Louis Stevenson fled to Tahiti from an Edinburgh

climate ‘so foul that the weak die young and the strong envy them their fate’. Alcoholism and squalor, despair and destitution, bigotry and prejudice have been as much the Scottish experience as great writers, noble architecture, top schools and the world’s finest whisky. Even today, life expectancy at birth remains the lowest in the UK.

Through all of this Scotland remained and remains a proudly different country from England, with its own legal system, educational curriculum, banks and pound notes. Now it has its own Parliament too. The Referendum will ask voters to decide whether any benefits from full independence will compensate for the loss of the advantages conferred by and through the Union.

There is a further dimension that has effectively been excluded from the Referendum but which should not be forgotten – Scotland dispersed. The Act of Union did not merely open the road to London. It empowered Scots to change the world. Scottish family and town names span the English-speaking world. During our exchange year in Parramatta, our children attended Burnside School. In New Zealand read Dunedin for Edinburgh.

Canada, in particular, from Nova Scotia to the Pacific via Craigellachie, was made by its Scots. John A Macdonald, architect of confederation and first Prime Minister, promised a Canadian Pacific Railway. Central to that astonishing achievement were two scions of Clan Grant, Donald Smith and Stephen Grant. ‘Stand Fast Craigellachie’, Grant telegraphed his cousin when it seemed that the scheme must founder, Craigellachie being the ancestral rallying point. It was at Craigellachie that the last spike was driven.

The railroad was brought to Victoria by Robert Dunsmuir, with wealth and influence acquired through his coal-mining empire on Vancouver Island. Dunsmuir had left Kilmarnock in 1850 at 24 hours’ notice as an indentured \$5 a week miner for the Hudson’s Bay Company. Four years later he and his family were the only members of the party not to give up and return home.

When he died in 1889 he was the richest man in British Columbia, in sole control of a commercial empire worth \$15 million. His taste for Scottish whisky probably shortened his life and he did not live to see the completion of his grand house above Victoria, Craighdarroch Castle, named after the Ayrshire home of Annie Laurie.

This self-professed ‘stubborn Scot’, who would dismiss his

## Scottish independence



*Patrick  
Tobin*

opponents as ‘not having enough Scotch in them’, presided annually on Burns Night, that distinctively Scottish event celebrated as much by the diaspora as by those who remained at home. There will, I suspect, be few in Canada who will understand why the land of their fathers now wants to ‘go it alone’ when Union facilitated such an unprecedented expression of Scotland’s national identity.

Two linked questions come to mind. Why is the Referendum vote restricted to those actually resident in Scotland, the Scots who have stayed at home? Other Scots, many born in Scotland and with families still resident there, cannot cast their vote as to their country’s future relationship with the rest of Britain, while thousands of English and other incomers will do so. (I once asked Stewart’s Melville boys to raise hands if they had a grandparent born out of Scotland. Around half did so.)

And why, when so much of Scotland’s fame and influence has stemmed from the exporting of its genius and culture to the world, should contemporary Scotland seek affirmation through retreat into a narrower identity?

Twenty-first century Scots do not seek lessons in history. The world may visit the graves of Adam Smith and David Hume, but very few locals do so. Nor do Scots turn to the Kirk to stamp the Scottish character and govern their lives and thought.

The ‘Yes’ campaigners look forward, not back. I see the drive for independence more as a search for national identity rather than its affirmation. Proud banks have failed. Heavy industry has gone. The Armed Services are diminished. The Empire is a memory. The sea of faith has ebbed. There are few victories at Murrayfield. Rangers, Hearts and Hibernian are all demoted. The Edinburgh tram project is years late, vastly over budget and truncated. ‘O Flower of Scotland, when will we see your like again?’

Meanwhile, across Europe, the collapse of communism has created a plethora of small countries of similar size to Scotland and with fewer historical pretensions. That has led some in Europe to seek greater federal unity, feeding in turn the Little England separatism of UKIP.

There is an evident parallel between the Scottish National Party and UKIP. Each cloaks itself in patriotism, Dr Johnson’s ‘last refuge of the scoundrel’. Each claims that revival will

come only when the country casts off foreign shackles. Each needs the target which it attacks – the SNP ‘England’, UKIP ‘Europe’.

Yet nothing distinguishes Scots from English more sharply than their present view of Europe and the European community. UKIP has only one Scottish seat in the European parliament. Just as the Auld Alliance against England brought French queens to Holyrood, so Independent Scotland would seek the European embrace. In this it emulates Ireland, the first country to secede from the United Kingdom, and that in itself is a notable unpicking of historic Protestant ties to Ulster Unionism.

The old political mould in Scotland has been shattered. There was a time in the 1950s when the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party held more seats at Westminster than any other party. Now it has one. More remarkable yet has been the ending of decades of Labour Party supremacy in Scotland.

Throughout the 20th century the Labour Party was joined at the hip to the Scottish industrial working class. The administrations of 1997 to 2010 were packed with Scottish ‘big hitters’ – Gordon Brown, Robin Cook, John Reid, Derry Irvine, Charlie Falconer and Alistair Darling. Yet the ‘New Labour’ agenda which handed UK electoral success repeatedly to Old Fettesian Tony Blair has been the catalyst for the SNP to walk off with Old Labour’s clothes in Scotland.

Conventional wisdom has it that parties of protest always peter out, but the SNP’s ousting of Labour from Scottish hegemony hardly seems a flash in the pan. Rather, it has advanced from running a minority administration to an absolute majority in Holyrood, and this in the face of an electoral system of proportional representation designed to prevent such an outcome. The old order is rapidly changing.

The Tobins took from our time in Edinburgh huge respect for Scottish capability. We also learned fast enough that Scots will not take lessons from the English as to what they can or should do. That is a lesson that the ‘Better Together’ campaign ignores at its peril.

I do not doubt that an independent Scotland can cope on its own. I do doubt whether Scotland’s best interests lie in secession. Were I to have the vote this September I would now be asking Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon to articulate much more clearly their plans and vision for shaping a Scotland better fit for the 21st century. What is the point of independence if the same people pull the levers, the same opaqueness blunts critical analysis and the same Spanish practices frustrate open government?

A final thought: the very recent collapse of the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Bank of Scotland might yet incline many Scots against going it alone. Did not the Act of Union of 1707 stem from a previous financial catastrophe, the disastrous Darien scheme? Some may fear that North Sea oil will prove to be as chimerical a panacea for Scottish prosperity as that earlier lure of riches in Panama.

Scotland will probably play safe, but unionists should beware June 24th 2014, seventh centenary of the day when Robert Bruce sent proud Edward’s army ‘homewards tae think again’. Bannockburn might again make all the difference.

*Patrick Tobin was Principal of The Mary Erskine School and Stewart’s Melville College, Edinburgh, from 1989 until 2000, and Chairman of HMC in 1998.*

# A school remembers

As the country marks the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I, many boys' schools will be beginning to think about the destiny of their former pupils in the ensuing conflict. But what of the girls at the time: what do we know about girls' schools in 1914 and the fortunes of their alumnae? The Bolton School Foundation consists of a Girls' and a Boys' Division, each of which remembers the war years of 1914-1918 in different ways, as Sue Hincks and Philip Britton describe

In Bolton, the fateful assassination of Archduke Ferdinand on June 28th occurred in the middle of Bolton 'Wakes' Weeks when, by tradition, all the factories and mills closed down and the workers enjoyed a welcome two weeks' break from their normal working lives. For a brief spell, the air in Bolton was clean, as the chimneys ceased billowing grey smoke into the dark skies and the factory workers joined in their annual desertion of the Lancastrian cotton belt, heading for Blackpool, Bridlington, Filey, Morecambe, Scarborough and Southport.

Years later, the 'posh children' of Bolton School would regret that they alone had to go in to school during such a week but, in 1914, the forerunner of the current Bolton School Girls' Division, the Bolton High School for Girls, still closed for the festivities.

By 1914, the demise of the High School and the foundation of the Girls' Division as part of 'Bolton School' were already being planned. William Lever, soap magnate and philanthropist, wished to bequeath a magnificent gift to his hometown of Bolton. As a supporter of female emancipation, he wanted the girls of Bolton to have the same advantages as their male counterparts.

With this aim in mind, he had offered to bring together the Girls' High School and the Boys' Grammar School to form a single foundation, sited in a prosperous part of town in two magnificent purpose-built sandstone edifices. The Girls' and Boys' Divisions would have identical facilities and would stand next to each other as beacons of girls' and boys' education in the town.

Everything would be done on a grand scale – with two Great Halls, each as large as a Cambridge College refectory – and only the best materials would be used. The First World War delayed building work and it would be another 13 years before the Girls' Division took occupation of the first wing to be built of the splendid Bolton School buildings, which now grace Chorley New Road. On paper, however, the re-endowed and newly named 'Bolton School' formally came into existence on 1st April, 1915, comprised of a Girls' Division and a Boys' Division.

The early war years are well chronicled in the Girls' School Magazine, but there is remarkably little information about the impact of the conflict on life in the school. In fact, the impression is that life went on largely as usual. Then, as now, Bolton Girls were always most generous in responding to charitable appeals and were keen to support the troops in whatever way possible. The 1915 school magazine records, for example, that in the first two months of the year: four pairs of mittens, two mufflers and cigarettes were sent to the Navy; 18 pairs of socks, three body belts, one muffler and one



*Bolton School Remembrance Day. 'The School was to pay a heavy price. Of the 482 boys and 15 members of staff who served in the War, 81 were either killed or died from wounds.'*

pair of mittens were sent to the Belgian Army; and 17 pairs of mittens, 16 mufflers, one helmet, six pairs of cuffs, three body belts and 102 handkerchiefs were sent to the Field Force Fund.

The 'Past and Present Club' of former pupils was also active in its support from the outset. Owing to the war, it was decided not to hold a meeting in autumn 1914, with members being asked instead to contribute at least one body belt to the Queen's Fund. This appeal elicited a splendid response and the girls were able to forward 110 pairs of socks and 100 body belts for the use of those at the Front.

Old Girls also contributed to the war effort by becoming Red Cross nurses, bank clerks or librarians in place of men who had gone to war. The Bolton Infirmary offered a one-month introductory nursing course and comments by one volunteer nurse make amusing reading. In describing her duties, she said, *inter alia*:

When on day duty (8.30 am to 8.30 pm), the Red Cross nurse has to see that the wards are thoroughly clean, the floors swept and polished, the grates cleaned, and the fires

## First World War



Sue Hincks

lit. This sounds hard work, but the patients are always eager and ready to help; they would never stand by and see a nurse clean a grate or polish a floor if they had the strength to do it.

In 1916 the magazine records more donations made or funded by the girls. These articles chart the progress of the War and include: 155 respirators for Belgian soldiers; 18 handkerchiefs to Lady French's Field Force Fund; 64 pairs of socks to the New Zealand contingent; 109 knitted squares for blankets for Serbians and British prisoners in Germany; mufflers, helmets, socks and mittens for Bolton Territorials, 5th Battalion; 30 pairs mine sweepers' gloves, also a jersey and socks for mine-sweepers; 180 sand-bags to Miss Tyler's Fund; various articles of clothing for French children in war areas.

The School Magazine was not printed in 1917, 1918 or 1919 because of the need to contain costs, so we do not have detailed records of what happened during that period. There are however the reminiscences of an Old Girl, Norah Penston, who recalled:

At the end of the 1918 war and for a while afterwards catering must have been particularly difficult, potatoes were scarce and rice had to be substituted. Boiled rice is not very palatable and to endure it day after day was irksome and depressing. 'Spotted dog', which frequently appeared as a boiled pudding, was not very delectable fare either. But we often had fun with the jam tart. It was *de rigueur* to eat it with a fork only. This is not easy if the pastry happens to be a bit hard. Pieces do tend to fly off one's plate unless the tart is very gently handled. You went down several notches in the estimation of your fellows if your lack of skill brought reproach on your table.

Throughout the war the Headmistress was Miss Dymond. In 1906, His Majesty's inspectors had congratulated the governors on having 'a very capable headmistress who is exercising a good influence on the girlhood of Bolton, not only intellectually but in other ways, not less important in the formation of their characters. Her influence is felt in every corner of the school.'

She was known for working incessantly and attending to every detail. When the King had proclaimed a week's holiday in honour of the Coronation in 1911, such was her devotion to duty that she had said, "The girls taking the Higher Certificate cannot possibly spare the time from their study" and gave up her own holiday to stay with them.

Miss Dymond kept a scrapbook in which she pasted every receipt or postcard received from War Charities throughout the First World War. Not long after the end of the conflict, she retired on health grounds in 1919, having been Headmistress for 26 years.

One hundred years later, the principal Academic Society in the Girls' Division is named after Miss Dymond. The 800 girls who attend the School will mark the outbreak of World War I with a battlefields trip and will remember the Fallen in their traditional Armistice Service, which is attended every year by 60 or so members of the Old Girls' Association. Their forebears may not have endured the fighting, but they also served the Nation at a time of great adversity.

*Sue Hincks is the Headmistress of Bolton School Girls' Division.*

One of the first actions taken after the outbreak of war was to establish a Roll of Honour to record the names of boys and staff that had left to fight for their King and Country. This appeared for the first time in December 1914 and became a regular feature in all future editions of *The Boltonian*, until the War was over.

The School was to pay a heavy price. Of the 482 boys and 15 members of staff who served in the War, 81 were either killed or died from wounds. Among those killed in 1916 was C H Roberts, fighting in France. Affectionately known as 'Bobs', he entered School with a scholarship and became captain of the football XI, captain of athletics and an outstanding captain of the school. He left in 1915 having won the Senior Thomasson Scholarship and the Hulton Leaving Exhibition before moving on to King's College, Cambridge. He was but one example of the many fine young men who gave their lives in the conflict.

The boys and staff who remained at school were immediately keen to help the war effort in whatever way possible and a box was placed in the school in which boys might put contributions from their pocket money for the benefit of those suffering through the war. There was also a generous response to Princess Mary's Appeal. The most significant event in autumn 1914, however, was the inauguration of a School Cadet Corps and drilling was soon in full swing under the leadership of Sergeant Hammond.



Philip Britton



*Bolton School campus. Right: Bolton School Riley Centre. 'The stunning elliptical glass-fronted building, which links to the Senior Girls' and Senior Boys' Schools by two-tier walkways, completes Leverhulme's vision...'*

About 70 boys and most of the Masters enrolled. Dummy rifles had been obtained and the movements of rifle drill were soon becoming increasingly efficient. There was however the need for a rifle range and the chairman of governors, John Barlow, kindly promised to provide one, which was in use early in 1915.

The Cadet Corps was officially recognised by the West Lancashire Association Territorial Force at the end of March 1915, with the Headmaster, W G Lipscomb, being Captain and Officer Commanding. They held their first camp in 1915 at Abergele. Meanwhile there were many boys who felt the call to duty, yet could not join the Cadet Corps because they were under the age of 14 and therefore ineligible.

In these circumstances the Scout Movement had a special appeal and so, in 1915, a scout troop was formed at school for the junior boys. They too arranged a camp in 1915 which was held at Ribchester.

Prize Day in 1915 was the first to be held under the new name of Bolton School. The prize winners decided, on their own initiative, that instead of receiving books or other prizes, the money – which amounted to £46 – should be sent for the care of sick and wounded soldiers. It was not however a Prize Day without prizes because the boys were given a certificate of sacrifice!

The war was continuing for much longer than many had anticipated at the outset and in 1916, in response to an appeal by Lady Burghclere, it was decided to send 30 shillings every month to provide parcels for British prisoners of war interned in Germany. At the beginning of the spring term 1918, a War Savings Association was launched in school in preparation for the visit to Bolton of the tank 'Egbert', during the first week of February. By the end of Tank Week, the membership had reached 124, generating total subscriptions of £283 12s 11d.

Regular savings of small weekly amounts continued to be a feature and most boys who were not already in other Associations or saving through the Post Office became members. *The Boltonian* reported in 1917 an incident that happened 'somewhere in Flanders', as the censor required it to be described.

A private had received his copy of *The Boltonian* that morning and left it on his desk whilst attending to a colleague's injured arm. An officer walked by and noticed

the magazine lying on the desk and, being a Boltonian, it caught his attention. It transpired that the private knew the two brothers of the officer very well and they enjoyed a pleasant conversation reminiscing about Bolton School!

The Debating Society, as indeed all other societies, remained active during the war. The societies were a key force in maintaining the spirit of the school. Debates were held on a wide range of subjects, including the motion that it was a matter of regret that the war had superseded the weather as a topic of conversation. After the war had come to an end, the Society debated the motion 'That this house considers the Armistice premature and deplorable.'

In 1918 Lord Leverhulme was elected Mayor of Bolton and the following day hostilities ceased, which the school hoped was a good omen. The new buildings may have been no nearer being started but Lord Leverhulme had remained firm in his vision and the momentum was picked up again after an architectural competition was held in June 1917. Each wing had to be able to accommodate 500 pupils and there had to be a central chapel incorporated in the designs. An architect from Manchester, C T Adshead, won the prize money of 250 guineas and the extensive buildings were finally started in 1924.

In the event the central chapel was never built, but the land earmarked for it is now the site of our new Riley Sixth Form Centre, which was recently eponymously named and officially opened by benefactor and Old Boy, Ian Riley.

The new centre, which has been in use since September last year, provides the best of both worlds – a hub for social activities and study, whilst allowing the school to retain single sex teaching. The stunning elliptical glass-fronted building, which links to the Senior Girls' and Senior Boys' Schools by two-tier walkways, completes Leverhulme's vision of a central quadrangle based on the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and was designed by Cassidy and Ashton Architects and built by Seddons.

*Philip Britton is the Headmaster of Bolton School Boys' Division.*

# Promethean women in the Great War

Christopher Martin describes some of the experiences of women on the Home Front

‘The shot fired in Serbia summoned men to their most ancient occupation – and women to every other.’ The American journalist Mabel Dagget neatly summarises the colossal impact that the declaration of war had on every aspect of women’s life in the UK.

Previously a married woman’s place was thought, by men at least, to be in the home or, for some two million predominantly single women, in domestic service. Even waged women only very rarely held skilled jobs, these being invariably reserved for men.

And yet, in just two years, by 1916 this pattern had become unrecognisable. A social tsunami had overwhelmed the country. Every common assumption about women’s capacity for work of all kinds had been challenged.

Women of all classes were immediately affected, both those below stairs and those above. An editorial in *The Lady*, just a week after Britain joined the conflict, ridiculed the idea that war was not a woman’s business. ‘The summons that calls out our fighting men ... scarcely less tests the courage of those

who have to stay at home... This passive form of courage is largely shared by women, most especially by those who have dear friends or relatives at the front.’

Women of every class were exhorted to respond to the gravity of the situation. They would have to play a central part in the alleviation of suffering, and appeals to their patriotism were explicit. ‘The fact that one cannot bear arms does not excuse anyone from helping their country’s cause by fighting such foes as misery, pain and poverty, the dire followers of all battles, whether lost or won.’

It seems unlikely, however, that anyone could have foreseen at the outset the extent to which the country’s social fabric was about to be transformed. By 1916, when conscription was introduced for the first time, the war effort was seen as depending on women in ways that neither women themselves nor the men who made political and military decisions had ever envisaged.

Suddenly, in the blink of an eye it seemed, women were everywhere where they’d never been before. They were mostly



*The Land Army. ‘When war broke out, I’d just left school ... I was completely, utterly and absolutely innocent, as we all were. I joined a course for women at Sealham College. One morning I saw on the notice board, “Will Miss Hillier please take the sow to the boar.” So I harnessed the sow with a halter, marched her down the road and popped her into a stable at the Boar Hotel. I thought I’d done a good job, but when I came back there was an awful row... Eventually I got allocated to an isolated farm near Totnes.’*

in uniform of some kind, wearing shorter skirts, because long ones impeded movement, or, even more scandalously, trousers. They were policewomen on the streets, clippies on the buses, ambulance drivers and nurses in hospitals, welders, lathe operators, mill workers, munition factory workers, land girls, members of the Women's Volunteer Reserve, and in the WAAC, the WRNS and the WRAF.

They demonstrated they had the physical strength of navvies and could develop the technical skills of engineers or arc-welders. They built aircraft. They drove lorries. They staffed field hospitals, often under fire. They were, in a word, the 'Home Front', a term coined after the Zeppelin air raids on London that caused many deaths – the first time the civilian population had been specifically attacked.

The notorious propaganda placard 'Women of Britain say GO!', designed to shame their men into fighting, might equally have applied to women themselves as they set about entirely new work on an unprecedented scale.

Foremost among demands on their services were those of the munition factories, such that by 1918 nearly a million women were employed in this vital work, forming 75% of this work force. The work they now undertook was physically demanding and highly dangerous, for initially shells were all filled by hand. The health risks were appalling. Toxic jaundice was a killer – there were 57 deaths in 1916 alone.

During the course of the war, protective clothing was introduced, ventilation in the arsenals was improved and, later, machine filling reduced risks somewhat, but at first the women went to work unaware of the dangers they faced. They were known as canaries because by the end of a shift they had turned yellow from head to foot.

Not everyone appreciated their immense contribution to the prosecution of the war. The Superintendent of HM Cordite Factories, who should have known better, wrote: 'This work is suitable for women. It's unskilled, monotonous and dead-end... It suits their temperament.'<sup>1</sup>

Mary Robertson seems to confirm this view. 'We munitions workers were the lowest form of life as seen through the eyes of the general public. They called us all sorts of things because we were supposed to make a lot of money, but 25/- a week's not a great sum, is it? You had to fill so many shells and after that you got a bonus for how many more you filled. This was a bad thing because it led to carelessness. If the shells were too light, they'd fall short when fired.'<sup>2</sup>

Mabel Lethbridge recalls vividly the physical demands made on the 'munitionettes' and the very real dangers of handling TNT. 'I was put in a shell-filling shed for 18 pounders. The older women were miserable because there'd been so many explosions. There was a great feeling of tension there ... it was very tiring. The shells were very heavy and you had to kneel down in front of the machines. When you stood up, you felt you hadn't got any knees and you hadn't got any back – just one aching mass. That was from all the carrying, the long hours and the weight.'<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Mrs M Hall paints a more cheerful picture of the same hard work. 'We worked ten hours a day from 8:00 to 6:30. One hour for dinner ... no breaks. There wasn't a drone in that factory. Every girl worked and worked and worked. It was just magic. We worked and we stood and we sat and we sang. We were such a happy band of women in such treacherous conditions. We were perfectly yellow, right



down through body, legs and toenails even. What a bevy of beauties! If your hair was fair or brown it went a beautiful gold. But if there was any grey, it went grass-green.'<sup>2</sup>

Girls inevitably developed personal ways of enlivening their repetitive labour. Some at Woolwich Arsenal admitted to slipping little love letters into the shells they were filling with TNT, apparently without thinking through what the shells were for when they arrived at the other end.<sup>1</sup>

Many women drew a distinction between work in munitions arsenals, which was destined to add to the cruel waste of human life, and other work which was not and which in any case involved skills that would still be required when hostilities ended. Such work was no less demanding, however. One might somehow be tempted to imagine that work on the land would be less strenuous than work in industrial contexts, but one would be wrong.

Mary Hillier's impulse on leaving school was to join the Women's National Land Service Corps. She came from a sheltered middle class background and found herself suddenly catapulted into a class-free milieu, learning new skills alongside contemporaries whom she would probably never have encountered before the war:

When war broke out, I'd just left school ... I was completely, utterly and absolutely innocent, as we all were. I joined a course for women at Sealham College. One morning I saw on the notice board, 'Will Miss Hillier please take the sow to the boar.'

*Continued overleaf* →

## First World War

So I harnessed the sow with a halter, marched her down the road and popped her into a stable at the Boar Hotel. I thought I'd done a good job, but when I came back there was an awful row...

Eventually I got allocated to an isolated farm near Totnes. I got up at 5.00 to milk the cows and just kept on (working), very often until 9.00 at night. I stuck it for six months.<sup>2</sup>

There was clearly very little time in which to develop a social life of any kind. Kitty Eckersley was a mill worker and endured similarly long hours. 'I was a ring-spinner and we worked six days a week from 6.00 in the morning until half-past five at night, and I got the large sum of 15/6 a week.'<sup>2</sup>

This must help to explain the number of engagements and shotgun weddings at the time, for both men on brief leave from the front and women working all hours from home must have sensed an urgency to get on with life, especially when life itself appeared so fragile. It must also explain the popularity of the canteen, with lunchtime concerts and entertainments when young women could let their hair down for a few minutes, surrounded as they were by new friends and colleagues.

Paradoxically, the war was socialising women, but at a cost, for as is well known, few families were exempt from the catastrophic news of loss which hung over the country for so many years.

Inevitably, issues about equal pay and improved working conditions started to surface. Women started to sense that they had some serious industrial muscle, and while the majority were largely motivated by patriotism and a genuine wish to assist the war effort, they soon became intolerant of poor working conditions.

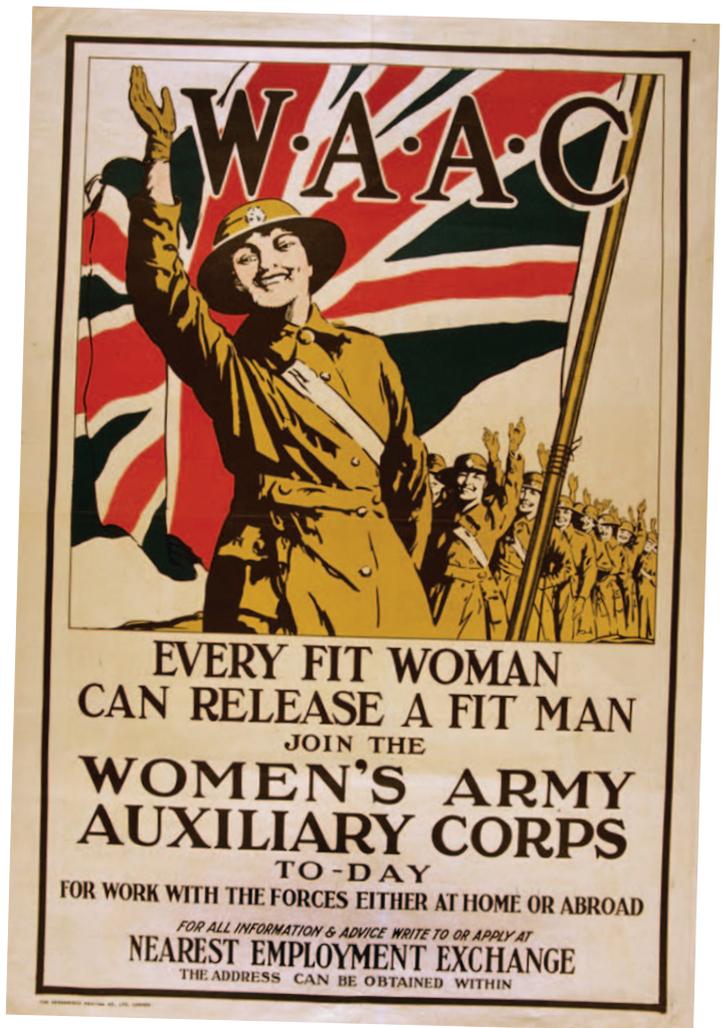
A six-hour shift without a break would today be considered intolerable, not merely in terms of human rights, but physiologically too. Thus the famous 'Tea-Break strike' in Newcastle quickly resulted in the introduction of a ten-minute break in each shift and improved toilet facilities.

Similar campaigns led in due course to the provision of crèches in some factories, enabling young mothers to join the work force. Equal pay was a harder nut to crack, however. Before the war, the few women working in engineering factories earned an average of 11/6 a week. This rose to 30/- during the war but even then remained only half a man's wage for doing much the same work. Trade union membership grew exponentially, so that by the end of the war there were nearly eight and a half million members of the Workers Union (WU).<sup>1</sup>

Night shifts proved popular for many women, because then they could look after children by day. This punishing routine, on a decreasingly sustaining diet, led to levels of exhaustion that is difficult to imagine today. Food shortages, of which people were aware almost immediately, were subsequently greatly aggravated by the U-boat campaign, and yet rationing was not introduced until 1918.

None of this is to suggest that it was the war that first created social or work-related organisations for women. This was already happening. Emancipation was in the air, and suffragettes had been making an impact on the country's social awareness, if not yet on its legislative processes, since well before the war.

Photography was rapidly improving and quickly became



a dynamic medium for sharing the experience of women at work around the country. This, of course, did not apply at that stage to life in the trenches, where strict censorship prevailed, but on the Home Front pictures of large groups of happy girls at work were widely available and were used to shore up morale among the troops.

Interestingly, during the war, girls tended not to display pictures of husbands or sweethearts publicly and even eschewed heroic pictures of film stars. Instead, they seem to have preferred group portraits of fellow workers, dirty, grimy, warts and all, wearing overalls and trousers proudly as badges of their value to the nation.<sup>1</sup>

*To be continued in the next issue.*

### References

1. Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*.
2. Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. Taped interviews from the Imperial War Museum.

*On leaving school, Christopher Martin served with the 10th Gurkha Rifles in the Malaya Emergency Campaign during National Service from 1957 to 1959.*

# Overseas Partnerships at Mill Hill

Jane Sanchez describes an ambitious and successful programme

In 2000, to celebrate the Millennium, Mill Hill launched a programme of overseas Partnerships, initially with communities in Ethiopia, India and Nicaragua. The principle aims are to develop understanding of different peoples and cultures; encourage self-reliance and confidence; give a focus for school-wide fundraising; and enable up to 60 sixth form pupils to travel and work with young people in poorer countries.

Pupils are selected for one of the Partnerships in the autumn term of the year they travel, after a rigorous application and interview process. Once selected the pupils are engaged in specialist training to fully prepare them for the challenges that await them and they also join forces to raise funds for the partnership initiative.

Since the Project was launched pupils have raised in excess of £200,000. The school has continued to develop the Overseas Partnerships in India and Nicaragua and we have recently developed a new Partnership in Zambia, linked with the Tag Rugby Trust.

## Los Pipitos Project, Nicaragua

The Nicaragua Overseas Partnership was established in the early 2000s when a teacher at Mill Hill, who had spent some years working in Central America, wanted to share his experiences of Nicaragua with pupils.

While in Nicaragua, he was able to support Los Pipitos, a national charity that worked with disabled children and their families, giving families practical support to fully engage with their children, and to promote the dignity and self-worth of disabled people, by providing vocational training, physiotherapy and inclusive activities for disabled children and their siblings.

Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the Americas, with only basic national medical resources, and many people live in remote places with limited access to medical





facilities. The main disabilities arise from complications during pregnancy and/or at delivery, due to lack of timely interventions. In the area we visit, there is also a high incidence of congenital deafness, thought to be caused by industrial pollution.

Children come to the Los Pipitos centres with their parents and siblings for several reasons. At the centre they can receive physiotherapy or language therapy, or be assessed for referral to the main centre in Managua (up to three hours away by bus).

The children enjoy spending time together in arts and crafts activities, playing games with each other as part of an inclusive club. Parents also receive support and training in, for example, sign-language classes so that they can communicate with their children. The centres provide a local support group for parents where they can share experiences with other parents and learn how to look after their child's specific needs.

Our pupils support the work of Los Pipitos in three main ways. They prepare and run activities for the children, such as arts and crafts and inclusive games, and, being closer in age to the children, they can make it all fun.

The pupils also paint and decorate the centres to make them even more colourful, stimulating and uplifting places for the children to be. Finally, through charity fundraising at school, we can pay for specialist equipment such as medical supplies, wheelchairs *etc.*

Our pupils gain so much from the experience, whether learning more Spanish or sign language or how to haggle in an outdoor market. In planning activities, they extend their creativity and resourcefulness and become more conscious of the challenges of a disabled child. By living in basic conditions, they return home with a stronger appreciation of the challenges faced every day by those less fortunate.

Each time we leave Los Pipitos, the children and our pupils are in floods of tears as they have bonded though fun in friendship.

*John Murphy*

### **Sri Jayendra School, Tamil Nadu in India**

Sri Jayendra School, Tamil Nadu, is in the village of Sankarnagar near Tirunelveli, about 60 km north of the most southerly tip of India. It was started in 1981 by the current Headmistress because there was no kindergarten in the village for her own two daughters. Since then it has grown to become



a school of 2700 pupils from kindergarten to the equivalent of upper sixth form. Mill Hill has had a partnership with the school for more than 15 years.

Sri Jayendra is English medium and each July we send between 15 and 20 lower sixth formers to live (on vegetarian curry) for three weeks in the school where they help teach conversational English. This exposure to 'the foreigners' is of immense benefit to the Indian pupils: not only does their spoken English improve but, the Headmistress believes, their entire outlook is changed. Over the years they have become less parochial in their views, more outgoing, ambitious and confident and they really believe the world is their oyster.

The Millhillians invariably describe their stay as a 'life changing experience', a hackneyed phrase perhaps, but it's absolutely true. It is a real privilege to be able to spend time in India not as a tourist but as part of a community, living and working with the locals.

Our pupils are impressed with the enthusiasm for learning shown by the children. Some are from incredibly poor backgrounds and have experienced great tragedy, but they are cheerful, determined and never use their circumstances as an excuse. We learn so much from them.

One special group is the Tsunami Kids – not a PC description but one they insist on. Their fishing village was inundated in 2004 and they are now looked after at the school with funds raised by Mill Hill. They are all from Backward or Most Backward Castes, but one girl we expect to become a doctor and most will get to university.

We also support the Little Monks, very poor Brahmin boys, not in the least holy, who study the Vedas – the Hindu Scriptures – as well as their normal lessons. They can become priests when they leave, if they want to, but so far none have: a degree in computer science or engineering is, seemingly, a more attractive option. Both these groups invariably spend as much time as they can with the Millhillians.

We bring Indian teachers to visit Mill Hill; raise money for library books, sporting facilities, science laboratories, computers and the like; sponsor poor children at the school; and we have made many close friends. They have made our lives richer and have changed the way many of us think about life: perhaps a fair exchange.

*Victoria Dempster*

### Zambia Tag Rugby Tour

Our partnership with the charity Tag Rugby Trust (TRT), is our most recent project and has proved very popular with our lower sixth form. Approximately 20 pupils are selected each year for a three-week tour to Zambia to work with local teachers and volunteers to deliver Tag Rugby coaching to government primary schools and orphanages in two centres, both in the copper belt town of Ndola and the more well-known Livingstone on the edge of the Victoria Falls.

Our pupils are assigned to different primary schools in the area and eventually select a team of ten children to represent their school in a tournament held at the end of the week. The tournament is run by our pupils, who mark the pitches, organise the transport to the venue, referee the matches and present the shirts.

No prior knowledge of the game is needed, as everyone in

the tour party receives training in how to coach Tag Rugby which culminates in a Tag Rugby Level 1 coaching award at the end of the three weeks.

TRT uses rugby as a vehicle to help ‘build futures’ by providing relevant and challenging opportunities for the children. It is also the most appropriate way for achieving the charity’s aim of developing grass roots rugby in lower tier rugby nations.

Sustainability and local ownership is central to how TRT runs its projects. The community-focused approach is designed to facilitate mass participation rugby, and our pupils involve themselves with coaching the local primary school teachers. Each school is given sufficient equipment, normally sponsored by Mill Hill parents, to enable the children to continue enjoying the sport. Some of the key benefits of Tag rugby over the contact game are that it’s naturally inclusive, it’s fun and it’s safe!

Whilst coaching is the primary activity, there is always scope for our pupils’ other skills to be put to the test. Organisers for tournament day, photography, video coverage, reporters for local newspapers and teaching the children in classrooms are just a few of the many ways in which our pupils have been involved in the project.

Over the short time that the Zambia Partnership Project has been running, the trips have proved very successful. Whilst our pupils have clearly made an impact on the children they have worked with, it has also created an opportunity for them to experience a new culture, to meet and make new friends and make memories that will last them a lifetime.

*Graeme Turner*

*Jane Sanchez is principal deputy head at Mill Hill.*





# Independent education in Zimbabwe

Howard Blackett explains the Molesworthian CHISZ

*Howard Blackett, Peterhouse Rector.*

It may come as something of a shock to hear that the independent sector is thriving out here in Zimbabwe and two schools, Peterhouse and St George's, Harare, are in overseas membership of HMC. Indeed all the 65 schools that make up The Conference of Independent Schools in Zimbabwe (CHISZ), a catholic collection of prep and senior schools, would comfortably fit somewhere within the ISC family.

There are many parallels between independent schools in Zimbabwe and the UK – the house system, the academic curriculum, the importance of breadth *etc* – which is scarcely surprising, given that most of them were established on the English model. But there are some striking differences too.

Independent we may be, but our term dates are set centrally and are the same for all schools, government and private, across Zimbabwe. We have to seek permission from the Ministry of Education to raise our fees (not granted this year – there has been a countrywide moratorium); and pupil disciplinary matters of a significant nature (expulsion, exclusion and suspension) have to be referred to the local Provincial Education Director (PED) for ratification – all significant irritants.

There is, on the other hand, little if any inspection of independent schools. CHISZ is in the process of introducing a voluntary Quality Assurance system based on the model in South Africa, but there is no equivalent of ISI/OFSTED.

There is a much greater sense of balance here between work and play than there is in the UK. This year's CHISZ conference, for example, held at Victoria Falls, was a 48-hour affair that somehow lasted for five days and I find that my golf handicap has at last dropped down into single figures!

Sitting at the top of the independent sector is Peterhouse, although I would say that, wouldn't it? Peterhouse is actually a group of three schools: Peterhouse Boys (500 boys aged 12 to 18, all boarders); Peterhouse Girls (440 girls aged 12 to 18, all but ten full boarders); and Springvale House Prep School (220 co-ed, five to 11, weekly boarding/day).

This large scale, predominantly boarding set-up occupies two magnificent sites 80km from Harare on either side of the main road, which runs SE to Mutare on the Mozambique border. Incidentally boarding starts at the age of five (Grade 1) at Springvale House and I suspect that there are more five, six and seven year-old boarders at Springvale House and Ruzawi (another local prep school) than there are in the whole of the UK.

Peterhouse is a remarkable place with a fine, if somewhat short, pedigree. The school is 60 next year and sport

dominates, of course, as it always has done over here. The playing fields are outstanding; we have a superb Cricket Centre of Excellence (indoor analysis centre, video recording, 1:1 coaching *etc*); and in the recent past several Petreans have played at international level (Gary Ballance, England cricket; Tendai Mtawarira (The Beast), South African rugby; Scott Gray and David Denton, Scotland rugby).

On a Saturday afternoon in the rugby season it is not uncommon to see over 1500 people watching the 1st XV (still compulsory viewing for all pupils) and, in addition to the 'major games', triathlon, mountain biking, water polo, volleyball, basketball and adventure training all thrive. Schools from the UK used to tour here regularly and usually went home with their tails between their legs and I am delighted to report that a senior cricket team from Sherborne School was here in February – hopefully a sign of things to come.

There is the temptation, to which I have just succumbed, to caricature this part of the world as a sportsman's paradise and, therefore, a cultural desert, but that would be a mistake. This year's schools' Eisteddfod, based in Harare, was a musical extravaganza spread over three weeks and it featured pupils from all over the country competing with each other for musical honours.

The singing was high class (this is Africa), as was some of the instrumental work, even though it obviously lacked the depth of talent evident at places like Wells Cathedral School. Afterwards we celebrated our successes in style with our own Eisteddfod highlights concert back here at Peterhouse.

Independent schools in Zimbabwe all use the Cambridge International Examination system (Zimbabwe is CIE's biggest customer in sub-Saharan Africa), under the watchful eye of Mark Barber – same House (Cowell's), same school (St Edward's, Oxford) as me – and the vast majority of pupils access higher education beyond the border, mostly in SA (Capetown, Rhodes, Stellenbosch and Pretoria), but also in the UK, the rest of Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and even China.

Most schools are academically comprehensive in their intake and so at Peterhouse a few pupils at sixth form level, who struggle with the demands of A level, follow a Hunter Guide course, in preparation not so much for university but for a life in the bush making a living out of rich American tourists. Much of the work they do is conducted in the school's own game reserve (Gosho Park) which is home to about 150

animals including zebra, giraffe, kudu, eland, blesbok, sable, wildebeest and impala.

School fees are very modest by UK standards, the equivalent of about £8000 per annum for full boarding, but the issues are the same – parents struggling to pay, bad debts, complaints about extras on the bill *etc.* Teachers, too, are paid modestly in comparison with the UK, but their package, which includes accommodation, education of children free of charge, utilities and medical care, means that the overall standard of living is very comfortable, particularly for families.

Any article, even a snap shot like this, on independent schooling in Zimbabwe in general and Peterhouse in particular would be incomplete without mention of the school's strong commitment to the Anglican tradition of the Christian faith, corporal punishment (still used from time to time) and the amazing standards of discipline and respect shown by pupils, all reminiscent of the 1950s English public school.

Do come with your teams – this is a great place to tour – and send us your school leavers for GAP placements. I did my GAP year here in 1979. Most of all, don't believe everything you read in the British press about Zimbabwe. It's an amazing country where independent education is going strong.

*Howard Blackett, previously Headmaster of Dover College and The Royal Hospital School, Ipswich, has been the Rector of the Peterhouse Group, Zimbabwe since January 2013.*

*Peterhouse students. 'School fees are very modest by UK standards, the equivalent of about £8000 per annum for full boarding...'*



*Compulsory viewing: Peterhouse's 1st XV playing Falcon.*

*Peterhouse girls' hockey. 'Sport dominates, of course, as it always has done over here.'*



# American universities admissions

A school perspective: Cambridge, Cambs or Cambridge, Mass, asks Rob Harry



Independent school parents are rightly interested in ‘value for money’, as well as in ensuring that their children leave school as culturally open-minded and responsible young people who are going to make their way in the world.

With the new UK university fees regime firmly in place, and rumours that further increases could be just around the corner, it is natural that parents and pupils are looking further afield for higher education opportunities. Given the global outlook of today’s careers marketplace, such opportunities hold broad appeal for ambitious teenagers seeking to spread their wings.

The American higher education system offers pupils an alternative and exciting route to a university education. Over the past few years at Oundle, the number of pupils exploring this route has risen steadily, with 2014 being the most successful year on record for US admissions.

At the age of 16, some pupils have no idea what they want to do professionally. More commonly, they excel in such a diverse range of subjects that they find themselves spoilt for choice. At Oundle, the polymath is becoming increasingly common and, in response, parents are increasingly open to the idea that more time to experiment with academic interests – and possible career paths – can be a good thing.

The American university system embraces the ‘liberal arts’ tradition, exposing pupils to a broad spectrum of subjects and allowing them the freedom to declare their major at the end of their second year of study. My own experience at the University of Virginia (UVa) may, perhaps, afford a good example.

I started out as a pre-medical student, then briefly flirted with economics and politics before realising I had an abiding love of reading, especially poetry. As well as taking classes in English literature, I had the opportunity to complete courses in the philosophy of democracy, understanding Russian identity, history of jazz, Italian high renaissance and mannerist art, applied



*Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.*

calculus and financial accounting. As a result, I became a more dynamic and cross-disciplinary learner and, in turn, a more marketable career prospect.

The independent school ethos focuses on pupils gaining breadth of experience, from academic to extra-curricular and from sports to community service. Many pupils embrace such opportunities throughout their time in school and will benefit from the vast range of clubs, societies and intramural sports that American universities offer.

At UVa, for example, the administration places a great deal of responsibility in the hands of students, with student-run organisations such as the Honor Committee and Judiciary Committee. In so doing, it promotes the idea of 'student self-governance', an experience that not only encourages leadership, integrity and management skills, but is worth its weight in gold on a CV.

Forward-thinking schools now employ American educated teaching staff to help facilitate the demand for US university admissions guidance. At Oundle, for example, the Yale Fellows are recent graduates who teach subjects across the school, but who can also offer up-to-date anecdotal advice on university life in America, share their own admissions experience and offer valuable assistance in SAT/ACT preparation.

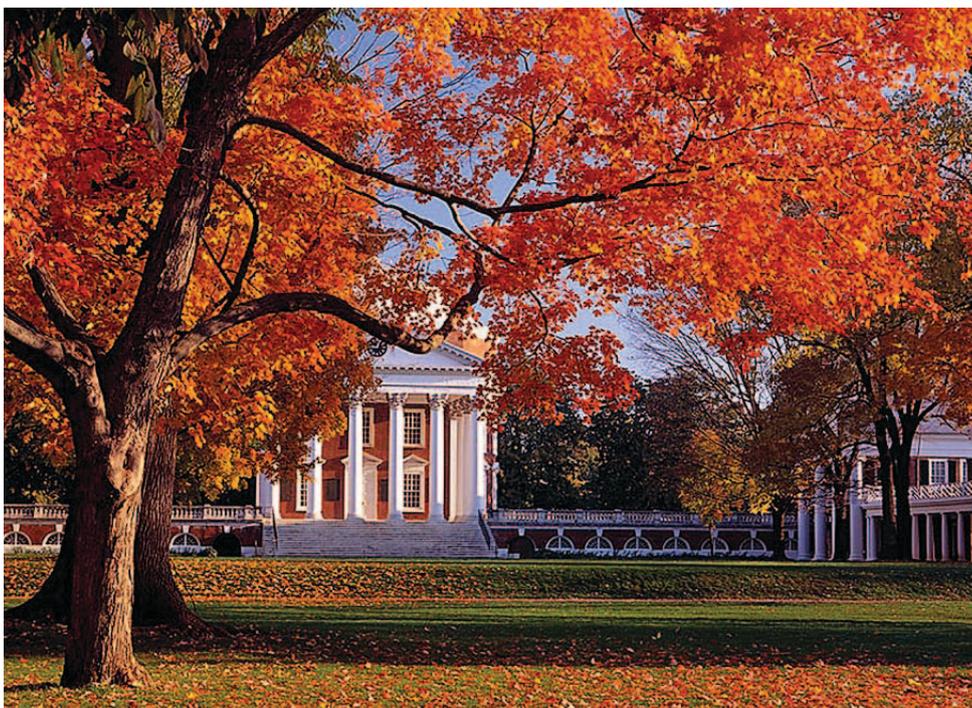
Often we find that interest comes from pupils who already have an international background. These teenagers are acutely aware of the intrinsic value of a global education and want to continue on this path after leaving school.

In terms of guidance, it is always worth trying to counter-balance the 'HYP effect' (the obsession with Harvard, Yale and Princeton) by reminding pupils and parents about the plethora of American universities that provide an equally outstanding educational experience. A good comparison when advising pupils is that for every one 'top ten UK university', there are five universities in the US that offer the same level of excellence.

Oundle pupils often apply simultaneously to UK and US universities. More risks can be taken in US university applications as there is no limit to the number of universities to which a pupil can apply, unlike the current UCAS system. However, with average acceptance rates for all Ivy League institutions standing at just under ten percent, applicants are well advised to be strategic in their selection.

This year, for example, Oundle saw ten pupils obtain offers from 22 colleges and universities including Carnegie-Mellon, Columbia, University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles, Emory, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Middlebury, Notre Dame, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington University in St Louis and the Yale-National University of Singapore joint programme.

Of course, the 'sticker price' of such an education may well put some parents off. However here too, prejudices can



*University of Virginia in the fall.*

be challenged. It is a fact that American universities have much deeper pockets than their UK counterparts and offer more financial aid than other universities around the world. More than 40 universities in the US boast endowments of over £1 billion, while only two in the UK can aspire to that level. Some institutions also have international scholarship competitions, such as the Morehead-Cain, Robertson and Jefferson Scholarships, for which Oundle had two finalists this year.

Whilst I whole-heartedly endorse looking towards the American higher education system, such advice should rightly come with words of caution. It would not be prudent to characterise American universities as the 'best' option since this depends entirely on the personality and character of each individual pupil.

Furthermore, it is a long way by plane (seven hours from London to New York and 11 hours from London to Los Angeles), so problems cannot always be solved by a quick family visit. Finally, of course, what was meant to be a four-year stay may well become considerably longer should a pupil land a job in America after graduating.

In the end, it is about exploring the options. Many businesses are global in their outlook and pursuing higher education overseas can be seen as enriching, and giving young people a greater degree of diversity and fluidity within the marketplace. At Oundle, we promote pupil choice with a myriad of avenues for higher education, each one tailored to individual needs and aspirations.

As educators, we are charged with helping pupils realise their full potential and guiding them to that next horizon, which could very well be a short drive down the M1, a ferry ride over the Channel or even a hop across the 'pond'.

*Robert Harry is head of careers and US university admissions at Oundle School and attended the University of Virginia, where he majored in English Literature. He is currently studying for an MEd at Cambridge (England).*

# 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](mailto:postmaster@dunbry.plus.com). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

## RHS boys raise money for Cancer Research UK

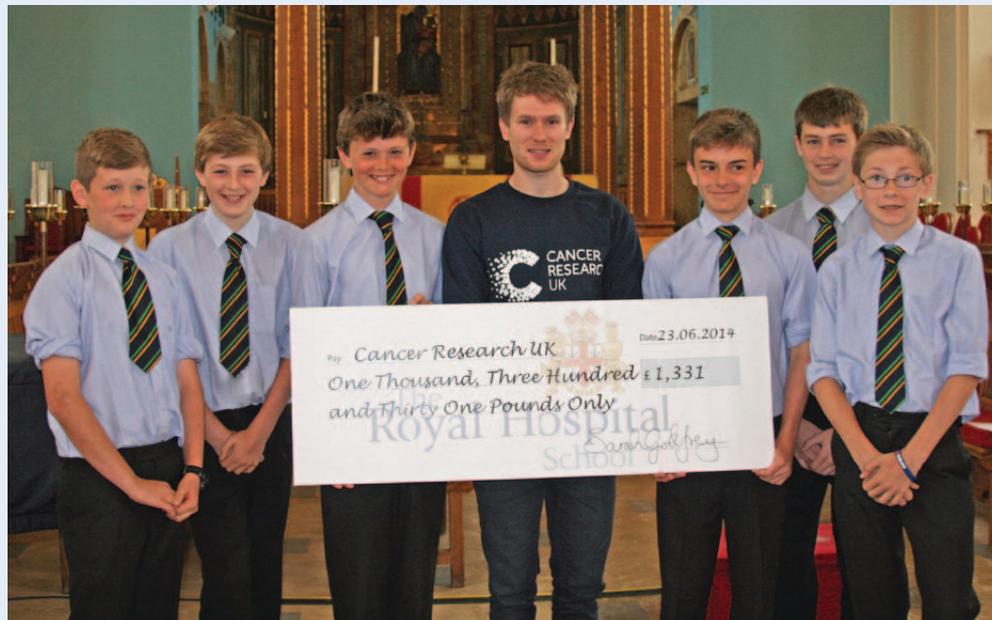
Last January Nick Sims and Tom Ponsonby, both in Year 8 at the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, decided to organise a sponsored run to raise money for Cancer Research UK, in memory of close members of their family whom they lost to cancer two years ago.

Four of their friends, all of whom know someone affected by the disease, wanted to support them, so Conor Davies, Tolly Young, Zaccary Frankham and Adam Warren joined Tom and Nick making sponsor sheets, designing t-shirts and spreading news of their project throughout the school community.

On Wednesday 15th January, the six boys set off on a 7.5km run in the school grounds on a route they planned themselves. All completed the course in their allocated time and then set about collecting the money that had been pledged.

The boys were particularly delighted to receive a cheque for £500 from Helping Hand, the BT Staff Charity Fund in Ipswich, which had read about the event in the *East Anglian Daily Times* and wanted to contribute.

A total of £1331 was raised, a huge achievement for the boys and a testament to their hard work and dedication. Tom Bamford from the Cancer Research UK Fundraising Committee came to the Royal Hospital School to receive the cheque from the boys.



## Felsted and the yellow jersey

Felsted School experienced another memorable day as the Tour de France became the Tour de Felsted.

The world's greatest cycle race passed through the famous Felsted School, recently visited by Her Majesty the Queen in May. Felsted is celebrating its 450th anniversary this year, one of only a few schools to have reached this historic milestone.

Thousands of spectators were able to watch on a giant screen as the Tour negotiated one of the most challenging corners in the race in front of the original Elizabethan Felsted School House, built in 1564. "The whole event was a tremendous, once in a life time spectacle" commented Dara Akomaloafe, Felsted Preparatory School pupil aged 12, who was playing in the Felsted School Steel Band for the day, entertaining the crowds.

Headmaster Dr Mike Walker was delighted with how Felsted was able to support the community in hosting such a famous event. "What a fantastic day of memory-making we have created for families today. I am delighted that so many have chosen Felsted as their Tour de France destination and all our work has paid off."



## Tanni Grey-Thompson speaks at Barnard Castle School

Barnard Castle School was privileged to have Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson speak at its inaugural annual Bentley Beetham Lecture recently.

The lecture series, named after the School's very own adventurer, Bentley Beetham, is based around the idea of endeavour, of overcoming adversity which Bentley did on many of his famous climbs.

Bentley started as a boarder at the school between 1897 and 1903 and returned in 1914 to become a teacher of natural history, retiring in 1949. He was an intrepid climber and an internationally-renowned mountaineer who attempted to climb Everest in 1924.

At that time he would have had very meagre equipment, including wooden skis, now in the possession of the school. The climb was ill-fated: Bentley managed to get to Base Camp before succumbing to illness whilst his partners, who carried on, died in the attempt. Bentley continued to climb in the High Atlas and Tatar Mountains, and also in the Lake District, where he was photographed hanging upside down from an outcrop, wearing plus fours and a tweed jacket.

The school wanted to engage someone special to be the first speaker and Baroness Grey-Thompson seemed an obvious choice. Tanni, who is a parent at the School, spoke on the theme 'Seize the Day'. She started by discussing the importance of education and her father's advice to her that education gives you choices, which she has passed on to her daughter, Carys.

She then spoke of the highs and lows of her 16-year career as a sportswoman and the importance of aiming high in all areas of your life. It is vital to have good people around you for encouragement and support, and gave as an example the occasion when she was carried up a flight of stairs by Sir Steve Redgrave and David Beckham in order to bid for the London 2012 Olympics.

Everyone needs guidance and encouragement, which is what helped Tanni achieve her 30 world records and 16 Paralympic medals all of which, she says modestly, accounts for 20 minutes on the track, but doesn't count for all the endless hours of training and dedication. Nothing worth achieving comes easily – a lesson to us all.



*Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson*

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## Sports minister opens King's Rochester Sports Centre

A sports centre in Medway now has some of the best facilities in the south-east, following a major transformation.

King's Rochester Sports Centre, formerly the Stirling Centre, officially opened its doors on Friday 27th June after a £500,000 refurbishment project and Minister for Sport, Tourism and Equalities, Helen Grant was there to cut the ribbon.

In an innovative arrangement, King's Rochester took over the Centre from Medway Council in October 2012 and over the intervening months has invested significantly to provide a first-rate facility for its own pupils and also for the local community.

The Centre has undergone a major makeover, both inside and out, including the refurbishment and re-flooring of the multi-purpose sports hall, whilst the fitness gym has been transformed with the installation of state of the art cardio-vascular equipment.

"I was delighted to officially open the refurbished King's Rochester Sports Centre, tour these fantastic sports facilities and meet such talented young people using them. The partnership between King's Rochester and Medway Council is a great example of what can be achieved in providing first class facilities to benefit both pupils and the local community in Kent," said Mrs Grant.



# Fit for purpose?

World Challenge find many of their applicants are not

New data released recently by leading schools expedition provider World Challenge has raised concerns about the levels of physical fitness amongst young people: 28% of young people applying to take part in a World Challenge expedition in 2013 failed to reach the company's recommended level of fitness, according to the evidence of a UK-wide survey of 5000 young people, predominantly aged 15-16.

Given that this was a self-selecting group – young people who wanted to volunteer for a physically challenging, overseas expedition – these results raise serious concerns about the general level of fitness amongst young people across the country. For instance, the percentage of this applicant group classed as overweight or obese was significantly lower than the national average (9% compared with 28% nationally).

“Far too often we look only at measurements like BMI to judge fitness, but fitness is not just about weight. Our data, taken over the last year, shows that whilst students signing up to World Challenge are more likely to be of healthy weight, more than one in four will still fail to reach our recommended target fitness level the first time around,” says Matt Eastlake, group managing director at World Challenge.

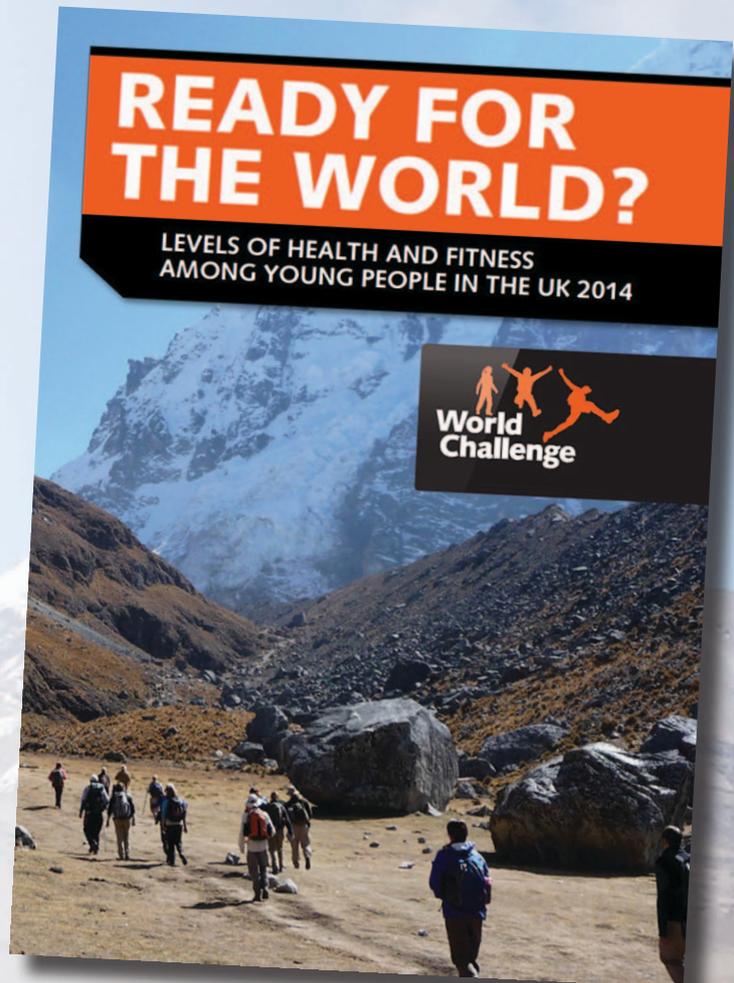
“To get ahead in today's world, young people need to be well-rounded individuals; not just focused on academic achievement but also challenging themselves, pushing themselves physically and mentally out of their comfort zone and gaining life experience and valuable transferable skills. But to be able to access, let alone make the most of, opportunities of this kind, physical fitness is key.”

World Challenge's data shows that of those who failed to reach the recommended average level of fitness first time around, 25% were able to reach that standard in a subsequent test following a short period of fitness training.

The Health Survey for England in 2012 reported that the proportion of young people meeting recommendations for physical activity is lower in older children and teenagers. Only 14% of boys and 8% of girls aged 13-15 meet the government's recommended target for physical activity.

Evidence from the Department for Education (DfE) also shows that participation in sport in secondary schools is declining (*Evidence on Physical Education and Sport in Schools, June 2013*) but, despite increased investment in school sport at primary level, no additional support has been provided to secondary schools since the Schools Sports Partnerships were pulled in 2011.

Expedition medical expert Dr Jon Dallimore said: “Simply doing your preferred exercise for half-an-hour, three times each week, will help to increase fitness levels, reduce heart rate and reduce recovery times. This could be walking or cycling to school instead of getting a lift, swimming, going to the gym or playing a sport. What's most important is that the activity is enjoyable, sustainable and is at a level to increase heart rate for at least half an hour.”



Dr Davina Deniszczyc, medical director, Wellbeing at Nuffield Health, added: “Instilling good habits from childhood is paramount. When we're young we are more impressionable and the habits we learn stay with us throughout our lives. Once children get to five years old, they should be doing a few different types of exercise a week that will help to build their muscles and bone strength as well as physical fitness.

“Nuffield Health believes in encouraging children and young people to learn about their health and fitness and we are delighted to see that World Challenge is seeking to increase an awareness of the importance of keeping fit from an early age.”

The report *Ready for the World? Levels of health and fitness among young people in the UK 2014* was published on 12th June, 2014, and is available to download free at [www.world-challenge.co.uk/insightreport](http://www.world-challenge.co.uk/insightreport)

*World Challenge is a for-profit UK provider of challenging expeditions in developing countries for schools and young people aged between 14 and 18. Founded in 1987, World Challenge organised expeditions for 669 UK teams from 247 schools with 700 teachers in 2013.*

*World Challenge:  
Chesham High  
climbing towards  
Kilimanjaro.*





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# Upping the game

Helen Fraser considers issues involved in making physical literacy and sport for all abilities an outstanding feature of the Girls' Day School Trust

We all recognise that a broad and balanced education must include aspects beyond the academic – a culturally rich co-curricular programme is vital, and also a range of sporting and other opportunities to be physically active.

We were therefore delighted when *School Sports* magazine named six GDST schools among its top 100 independent schools for sports, of which three – Sheffield, Putney and Central Newcastle High Schools – were among the top 12.

Nonetheless, the challenge for schools is clear and it involves balancing two objectives which, while not exactly contradictory, do involve slightly different approaches. The first objective is the entitlement and expectation for all pupils to take part in physical activities, preferably ones they enjoy, so that we can ensure that they see physical exercise in a positive light.

The second objective is the support and encouragement of the gifted few – making provision for the sporting 'elite', the ones who will go on to represent their school, their county, their region and sometimes even their nation.

Let us explore these two objectives in more detail, with a particular focus for the schools in GDST on the backdrop of national statistics highlighting the gender gap in physical activity between teenage girls and boys and between adult men and women.

## Not an optional extra

Physical activity and involvement in sport both provide a wide and sometimes unexpected range of benefits. The impact on physical health is obvious. It's not just the immediate fitness that is important; there is also a lot of evidence now that, for girls in particular, weight-bearing exercise in adolescence helps build bone strength and protects them from osteoporosis later on<sup>1</sup>. Active girls are less likely to develop type two diabetes<sup>2</sup>.

Sport also builds habits – girls and boys who get lots of exercise in their school years are more likely to be exercising in their 20s, 30s and 40s with all the benefits to health that brings. Maximising participation in sport in students' teens matters not just for the health of the individual woman or man but for the health of the nation.

Studies have shown that mental wellbeing is improved by physical activity – active girls are less likely to suffer from anxiety or depression<sup>3</sup>, whilst academic achievement is also positively influenced by being physically active – put simply, exercise is good for your brain. There is now a mass of scientific evidence that anything that speeds up the circulation in the body wakes up the brain and helps our mental function<sup>4</sup>, making it easier to maintain concentration and attention in class, as well as reducing absenteeism through illness.

Activities outside the academic curriculum also contribute to developing the dispositions we value in our pupils. Taking your team to a fixture, captaining it, building the strategy,



*Lacrosse at Putney.*

enjoying victory, facing defeat – these build life skills. A 2002 US survey of 400 senior women business executives found that 80% played organised sports when growing up, and 69% said sports helped them develop leadership skills that contributed to their professional success.

In addition, 86% believed sports helped them to be more disciplined; 68% credited sports with helping them deal with failure; and 59% noted that sports gave them a competitive edge<sup>5</sup>. A more recent survey commissioned by EY (as Ernst & Young are now known) has linked women in senior management positions to experience with sports, finding that 96 percent of the highest ranking female executives played sports, 55 percent of them at university level<sup>6</sup>.

When you think about it, it's not really that surprising. Sport, whether team or individual, is all about competition. In their book *The Confidence Code*, US authors Claire Shipman and Katty Kay cite research that girls who play team sports are more likely to graduate from college, find a job and be employed in male-dominated industries.

There's even a direct link between playing sports in high school and earning a bigger salary as an adult. They say:



*Sheffield National Final teams.*

'Learning to own victory and survive defeat in sports is apparently good training for owning triumphs and surviving setbacks at work.' Or, to put it another way, in order to win, you have to be prepared to lose. This is one of the reasons why GDST schools are looking at ways to help girls to take risks, build resilience and lose their fear of failure, and sports play a real role in that.

The authors of *The Confidence Code* also quote Richard Petty, a psychology professor at Ohio State University, who calls confidence 'the stuff that turns thoughts into action'. One of the chief barriers to more women progressing in the workplace isn't that they don't win the race; it's that they don't even make it to the starting line because they lack the confidence and courage to compete.

So for those of us involved in educating girls, it's important to provide them with the opportunities to develop that confidence and courage, through physical as well as mental risk-taking. And taking part in sports, win or lose, certainly helps to boost a girl's confidence.

## Supporting sporting excellence

The EY report also highlights some of the women leaders who have a sporting past: the Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff played volleyball; Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, was a member of the French national synchronized swimming team; Condoleezza Rice was a competitive figure skater and tennis player. Closer to home, Helen Grant, the Minister for Sport and Equalities, represented her county in hockey, tennis, athletics and cross-country, and was the regional under-16 judo champion.

At all our schools there are elite young sportswomen whose schools support them by being, for instance, very flexible with timetabling. Our schools want to win, so they want to develop top teams, and elite teams play a key role in building school pride internally and reputation externally.

Nonetheless, as schools, we should seek both to support the athletes who may be competing at a level that will see them representing their county or nation, and to cater for those who just want to have a go. There are lots of girls who would join

in if they didn't feel that they were bad at sport. So our schools have a twin track strategy – of continuing to develop elite sportswomen, but also ensuring that even the least sporty girl has fun and runs around until she is out of breath. The two aims are not mutually exclusive.

### Girls at risk

We can't take it for granted that girls and young women will see the benefits of playing sport and carry on with it through their teens. Nationally, girls become increasingly inactive as they approach and enter their teens and they start doing less activity than boys as soon as they're eight or nine. By the time they're 14, only 12% of girls are as active as they should be<sup>7</sup> and only 40% of 16 year-old girls do vigorous exercise at all.

Despite PE being compulsory in schools, one in five girls still does no activity in a week<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, a third of girls aged eight to 16 think that vigorous physical exercise is socially unacceptable.

The gender gap in adult sports participation to which this gives rise is stark – while 34% of UK men exercise or play sports at least five times a week, placing them 15 percentage points above the EU average and third among European countries, only 6% of women do – below the EU average and 19th among our European neighbours.

### Barriers to participation

So what's stopping girls from being more physically active? Some of it stems from self-image and peer pressure. Teenagers can be very self-conscious, girls especially so. This was a factor highlighted in the speech at our annual conference in June by Jennie Price, chief executive of Sport England, who discussed the findings of their research among girls and young women.

There is a reluctance to get sweaty or dishevelled, particularly if there aren't good facilities or sufficient time to wash, dry and do one's hair afterwards. While some commentators dismissed her views, the Sport England research provides compelling evidence for her remarks, and also attests to the positive impact of providing the right kind of facilities, such as individual shower and changing cubicles rather than communal changing rooms, and, yes, even hairdryers.

Family influence is a factor: girls whose mothers exercise are far more likely to do so themselves, whilst dissatisfaction with school provision has a significant part to play. Girls can often be put off school sport by the logistics involved: not enough time for washing and changing after sport, 'basic' facilities and a lack of privacy in changing rooms are all obstacles to full participation.

The sports available in school are not always appealing – many schools offer netball and hockey, when girls would



*GDST golf.*

perhaps prefer trampolining or badminton, Zumba or yoga. Schools need to take this into account in their planning.

As girls get older, they tend to prefer individual rather than team sport, though this is partially offset by the fact that, for many, the social aspects of sport are more important than the competitive atmosphere – taking part, especially with peers and friends, is more important than winning. But when schools turn exercise into a regime, PE can develop an image problem. Only three institutions are characterised by regimented physical exercise in public at set times, wearing regulation clothing: prisons, the armed forces ... and schools.

### Meeting the challenge

So is it all doom and gloom? Are we destined to have generations of unfit and unhealthy girls leaving schools with a time-bomb of long-term health problems ticking away? Not at all. There is much that schools, both independent and maintained, can do to make a difference.

*Continued overleaf* →

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(What can be known should be known)

**AFTER 'THE GOWNS OF RADLEY'**

(From syringes, cardboard and courts to Government Advisor)

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(Seen through the eyes of an ordinary German family)

**PARENTS – PARENTING FOR PREVENTION**

(Life skills for leaving home)

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SHAUN ATTWOOD

ROGER HARDING

ROGER HARDING

ANGELA FINDLAY

MANDY SALIGARI

In my view, the first plank of our philosophy should be ‘sport for all’ – that every pupil with an interest in sports or dance or other physical exercise should have that interest supported and nurtured, whether or not he or she will ever make the A team or its equivalent. That’s why I love it when our schools have A, B, C and D teams, and beyond, so that all girls who enjoy a sport have the chance to play it.

Schools can also look at the choice and range of activities on offer, adapted for the ages and stages of the pupils involved. Single-sex schools do have an advantage in being able to offer sport and PE provision tailored to girls. It’s important to offer individual as well as team sports and non-competitive options.

Activities available in our schools include Zumba, yoga, Pilates, rock climbing, tai chi, golf, taekwondo, trampolining, fencing, judo, dance, archery and more, as well as the more traditional pursuits such as netball, hockey, athletics, gymnastics or swimming. Across our schools we have such a range of sports and exercise that there will be at least one or more that a girl can enjoy and, possibly – through training, hard work and dedication – at which she can come to excel.

Fundamentally, it’s about changing our thinking and our approach. We need to stop thinking about *sport*, and start thinking about *girls* – their needs should be at the heart of our considerations. Every pupil is entitled to develop a degree of ‘physical literacy’ just as we would expect every student to develop numeracy, digital literacy and actual literacy – it’s not an optional extra.

Conventional PE and sport will be wonderful for about 25% of pupils, maybe slightly more, but the rest need something different. It’s about how embedded ‘sport for all’ is in the curriculum and the degree of involvement and support from non-PE staff. Rather than thinking in terms of sports and PE, one subject among many competing for space in the timetable, do we need to ‘rebrand’ it as *physical wellbeing* or *physical literacy*, to emphasise its cross-curricular importance?

The maxim, ‘first do no harm’, has been part of the lingua franca of the medical profession for hundreds of years. It may be a pledge we need to adopt when it comes to girls and school sport too. According to the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 23% of women say school PE put them off activity for life, and more than half of all secondary age girls (51%) are put off physical activity by their experiences of school sport and PE. So when it comes to sport, the minimum that schools need to do is work at *not* turning girls *off* sport and physical exercise.

Beyond that, cultivating the habit of, or even a love of, sport and physical activity in girls will benefit them throughout their lives, helping them to develop a positive self-image and self-esteem through character-forming experiences, and to stay fit and healthy.

It’s an issue that deserves the attention of all current and aspiring school leaders. Ultimately, it’s far too important just to be left to the PE and sports department – it needs a school-wide commitment to developing healthy bodies as well as minds, for a broad and balanced education in its fullest and truest sense.

*Helen Fraser is the chief executive of the Girls’ Day School Trust.*



*Hockey at Newcastle.*

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# Driving golf forward

ISGA wants to put more schools on course

Since the Independent Schools Golf Association (ISGA) was set up some seven years ago, golf has become a major sport for some schools in the UK.

The ISGA was established after David Quin's son moved up from his prep school, having played in the plentiful school tournaments run all around the country. Although many of these tournaments were run by senior schools there did not seem to be much, if any, competitive golf for those schools themselves, so the Quins set about organizing one under the auspices of the school their son now attended. After a couple of years of hard work it became apparent that a bigger organization was required to run the events that the ISGA now offer.

Focusing mainly on the team side of golf, the ISGA has now attracted over 200 hundred independent schools to their competitions. And such is the popularity of golf at schools that it became clear that there was room for a much broader approach.



This led to the founding of a new competition under the banner of British Schools Golf Association which runs a league open to all schools and colleges in the UK. New competitions for next year will also include a separate girls' tournament, as we have had many enquiries from girls' schools looking to take up the sport.

Golf is a great sport for school children as it has many benefits. It is a sport for life that promotes honesty and good behaviour on and off the course. The game is not a simple one to master and requires an immense amount of patience and focus.

As a round of golf takes up to four hours, that focus is required for the whole period and there are obvious benefits to be gained from transferring these skills into the classroom. Golf is also an effective learning tool as it makes one calculate yardages, distance perception and general course management. As golf is a self-regulating sport it also instills a sense of fairness and etiquette into playing the game, which is lacking in so many other sports.

Golf has made its way into the classroom with the Science of Golf. A free resource for all teachers to use in the classroom, it can be downloaded free from the TES website or the ISGA website. Currently over 50,000 people have downloaded the booklet which explains the science behind the game of golf, using laws such as energy and motion in classroom projects that can be undertaken by students of all ages.

The ISGA is partnering some highly qualified golf professionals to help teachers impart the basics of the game at their school. They are also working with a new concept that helps beginners at junior school age to start golf with fun games that can be played on a school playground or playing field. This is due to be rolled out over the 2014/15 academic year.

The standard of golf in schools has grown considerably since the ISGA set up their ten-plus competitions, run throughout the UK. The main competition is a knockout in which around 130 schools take part, with the UK being split into 19 areas. The winners of each area then attend a two-day national final which has been held at the Open Championship venues Carnoustie and Royal St George's in the last few years.

It has been interesting to see new schools come to the forefront recently and win national finals ahead of the few academy schools that previously dominated the sport. It might surprise many people to learn that over 100 schools in the UK either have their own golf course or practice facilities.

Although golf is mainly a solitary game where the player plays for their own score, in the Ryder Cup for men and the Solheim Cup for women, fought out on a national and team basis, golf promotes intense team spirit and camaraderie, which is the way the ISGA have looked at promoting golf into schools.

We also feel that teacher participation is important, so a teachers' competition runs alongside all the ISGA events.

Competition is as fierce there as it is with the students, since there are many scratch or single figure handicap teachers. There is also a nett competition for teachers off their full handicap which gives all a chance of winning.

Whilst golf has been in decline in lots of clubs around the UK, schools golf has seen a remarkable increase in students taking up the game. The ISGA is currently being set up in other countries so that in future tournaments can be played on a global basis. The next multi-national tournament is to be held at the Penina resort in Portugal in the February half term 2015, with five days of golf, including four competition rounds. More information about this tournament is available from ISGA.

Amongst the handful of professional golfers educated in independent schools is Sir Henry Cotton (Alleyn's), who won the Open Championship three times. He went on to be a famous golf course architect and Penina is one of his courses. He was also instrumental in setting up the Golf Foundation to help thousands of young golfers get into the game.

A very distinguished amateur was Harold Hilton (West Buckland) who won the Open Championship on two occasions and the Amateur Championship four times. He was also the only Briton to win both the US and British Amateur Championships in the same year – 1911.

More recent independent school alumni who have succeeded at the highest level in golf are Harry Barnes (Millfield), Paul Casey (Hampton), Nick Dougherty (QE Blackburn), Graeme McDowell (Coleraine) and Colin Montgomery (Leeds Grammar & Strathallan).

The ISGA produces a termly newsletter which is sent to around 2000 readers with results, information of upcoming competitions and golf news. The ISGA also promotes any



*The ISGA girls team, after winning the world ranking Sterling University event last year.*

prep school competitions run on their own courses, such as the Stowe Putter and Seaford Mashie. If you run a tournament of this kind, please get in touch with us so that we can list your tournament, at no charge.

For more information on golf in schools, tournaments or any questions regarding golf at your school, please contact David Quin at [ISGA.org.uk](http://ISGA.org.uk)

*David Quin was educated at Wycliffe and Sir John Cass and qualified as a Master Jeweller.*

*His wife, Naya, and son, Alex (Mill Hill) make up the rest of the ISGA team, but only Alex plays off scratch!*



*At the ISGA European Championships in Spain.*

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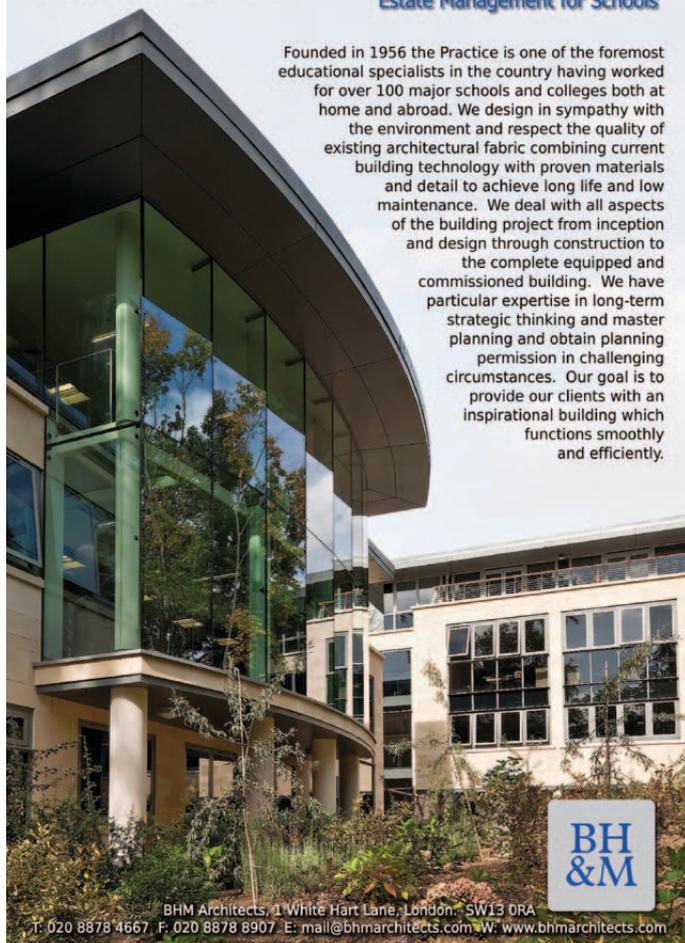
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# Royal wedding gown designer creates King's girls uniform

The girls at King's College, Taunton, are going to get A\* for fashion thanks to multi-award-winning Royal wedding gown designer Sassi Holford, who has redesigned their school uniform. The new look is launched in September 2014.

Girls were first admitted to King's College in 1991 when a local girls' school closed, and their uniform – navy blazer and a blue pleated skirt – was hastily put together. The outfit was not well liked and bore little resemblance to the boys' grey tweed jacket, which has been the standard since 1964.

Headmaster Richard Biggs approached Sassi, whose children attend the school, to enlist her professional knowledge and experience in designing a uniform for the girls that would create a consistent theme with the boys' uniform, appeal to the girls' sense of style and represent the values of the school.

Sassi worked with the school to design a co-ordinating uniform and to choose fabrics that incorporate the King's College colours. The girls' tailored jacket was produced in the same herringbone as the boys' blazer, but made more feminine with a navy blue velvet collar with weld detail.

The shirt has a stylish v-collar, inspired by a couture blouse from Sassi's current collection, and the skirt has complementing box pleats to match the jacket. A little élan has been added by lining the jacket in King's College red.

"Designing a school uniform was certainly a departure for me, but I've loved working with the staff and the young women of King's College to create a uniform that reflects their values and their style – and, of course, it will be very rewarding to see my own daughter in her new uniform that I have designed," Sassi comments.

The Headmaster, Richard Biggs, says: "I was always told that you change your school's uniform at your peril – it is a very difficult thing to get right. But we took the plunge and, with the expert and very welcome help of Sassi Holford, we've arrived at a new design which absolutely everybody thinks is fantastic.

"The look is fresh, smart, and very distinctive. Our boys and girls will certainly stand out from the crowd! I know several mothers who want to buy the jacket for themselves, which must be a really good sign."

Sassi Holford is a renowned wedding gown designer with boutiques in Chelsea and Taunton. All gowns are handmade in her Taunton studio by her first-class team of talented cutters, seamstresses and hand beaders. In 2013 Sassi was

honoured with the accolades British Bridal Designer of the Year in the Bridal Buyer Awards and Best Dress Designer in the Wedding Ideas Awards.

*Wedding dress, Niam Lyall (centre) and Sassi Holford, who also designed the wedding dress for Autumn Phillips.*



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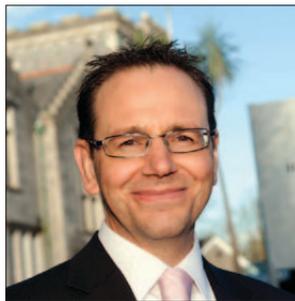
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# Thring of Uppingham

David Gibbs reviews Nigel Richardson's biography of a great Victorian educator

‘A man of striking gifts and singular strength and separateness of character:  
 the ablest and most original educationalist since Arnold;  
 a great schoolmaster and a born leader of men.’

Described thus by the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1877, Edward Thring could not have wished for a better endorsement for the nationally renowned school that he had created in an obscure East Midlands village. What was it that made him a great schoolmaster? How did his philosophy of education evolve? Why was his school different? And what is his legacy today? Dr Richardson provides answers to all these questions, and a good many more besides, in this masterly biography, long in the making and very well worth the waiting.

It was Dr Arnold, Headmaster at Rugby from 1828 to 1842, who is usually credited with creating the concept of what

came to be called the public school system. He aimed to inculcate religious and moral principles, gentlemanly conduct and intellectual ability, tellingly in that order.

Developing existing concepts such as prefects and houses, he sent out a series of Headmasters who spread the message through Victorian England. One of the best known Heads of all time, his image owed much to his first biographer, a devoted former pupil, A P Stanley, and Thomas Hughes's bestselling novel *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857).

Nigel Richardson shows that actually it was Thring, at Uppingham from 1853 until his death in office in 1887, who was a much more influential figure in shaping the fundamental character and nature of our independent schools today.

Thring's own unhappy experiences as a boarder at Ilminster Grammar School, near to his vicarage home in Somerset, and then in the notorious and unreformed Long Chamber at Eton, together with his raw and dispiriting experience of teaching as a young curate in the docks of Gloucester, led to his determination to make things better for others. God was at the heart of all he did, as he later wrote: ‘My sole motive was to do a work for Christ. The school as it now looks is entirely the result of this belief.’

He insisted on proper supervision for his pupils alongside a wide range of activities with appropriate facilities. He was the architect of the all-round and inclusive education – music, sport (though not obsessively so), plays, art, even gardening, alongside the classroom, which was not solely dedicated to the classics. He wanted every child to do something well. All should be given a sense of responsibility and independence, and opportunity for what William Temple was later to call ‘entry into the fullness of life’.

He inculcated his own philosophy of teaching, believing it was not simply ‘lecturing’ or ‘hammering’ knowledge but, rather, sound teaching simply delivered. He spent a lot of his time in the classroom. The curriculum was broad, including modern languages, history, geography and some basic science.

He saw little point in making the weaker boys struggle with Latin and Greek. The following words, to be found in his book *Education and School* (1864) would be echoed in many inspection reports today, although without, it should be said, the gender limitations: ‘Schools should broaden boys’ horizons, helping them to acquire the skills of independent learning without masters standing over them.’

Whereas Arnold in his drive for moral purity believed it was his solemn duty to remove unpromising pupil material, Thring, characteristically, regarded expulsion as a sign of his own failure. He was a schoolmaster to his core.

Continued overleaf 



Visionary and tenacious, his German wife, whom he met whilst on the grand tour, was a willing helpmeet and created a home which was at the heart of the Uppingham community.

His determination to marry ruled out an Oxbridge fellowship, so Thring applied for school headships. Runner up at Durham School to the Headmaster of Uppingham, he promptly applied for the now vacant post in Rutland. Inheriting a school of 40 boys in 1853, Thring raised the numbers to beyond 300 by 1865. Grasping the essentials of modern marketing, and with the capacity to make things happen, he placed this obscure country grammar school on the national map, and created a huge personal following.

It must also be said that he was extremely lucky to set out on his headship at a propitious time – reform was in the air, notably competitive exams for entry to the civil service and the army; the railway age made possible a national market for boarders; whilst the fruits of industrialisation were boosting middle class incomes.

*Thring of Uppingham – Victorian Educator* is an absorbing read from one of the most thoughtful, original and perceptive Heads of recent times. The research is immensely thorough as one might expect from a project that has broadened out from the author's PhD thesis on the school's migration to Borth in North Wales for a year (1875-76), following a series of typhoid outbreaks in Uppingham. His knowledge, though, is lightly worn.

Whilst it is a pity that the publisher's final proof-reading was not entirely effective, this is small complaint. The splendid footnotes, never too long, are a fund of pertinent and often unexpected information. To give just one example: appointed to Uppingham on 30th August 1853, Thring was installed in time for the first day of term on 10th September!

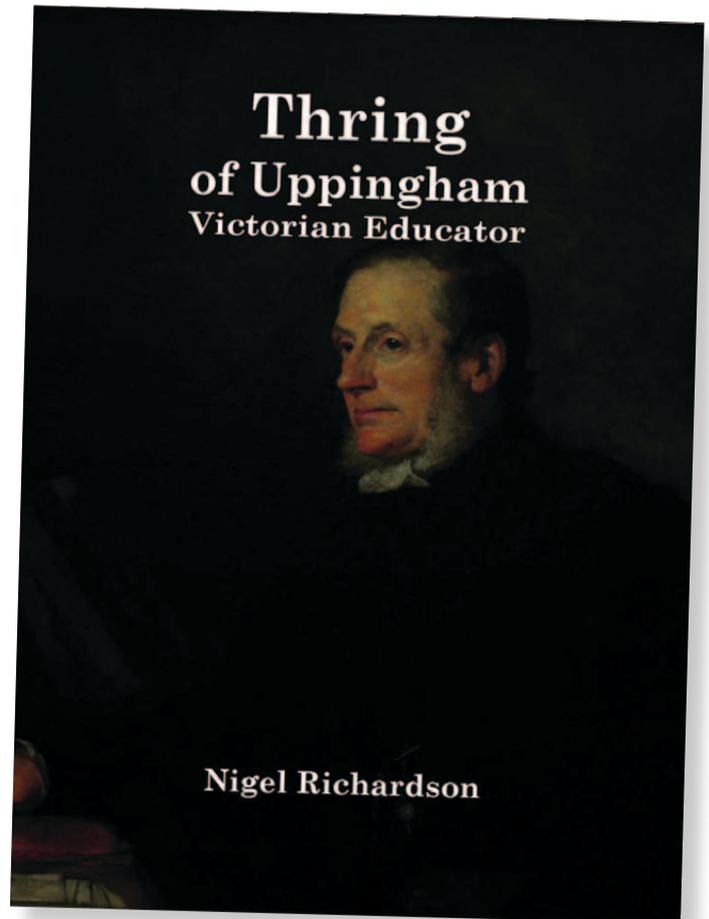
It is interesting, too, how little changes. Thring has intense rows with a few parents, loyal support from many; frustrated by some of his colleagues, notably his early housemasters, he recruited and retained a number of talented all-rounders; he was always entrepreneurial, recruiting pupils, acquiring premises, building creatively and usefully.

There were ongoing rows with trustees; joys in the successes of pupils, especially with the large numbers who went into worthy careers both at home and abroad; and, creating links with what we now call disadvantaged communities, he started one of the very first public school missions in London's docklands.

Today's Heads will find all of this familiar territory. Inevitably they will reflect on how much more constrained they are than the Victorian giants. By our standards, Thring was dictatorial and dogmatic, he brooked little opposition, and he could be heavy handed. He also spent the whole of his career of 34 years in one school.

He wrote and published prolifically, and in his later years did much to encourage the education of girls. He was the leading light in the foundation and development of the Headmasters' Conference (HMC). If the idea came from Mitchinson of King's, Canterbury, it was Thring who made it happen, and its first meeting in 1869 was at Uppingham, interestingly from 21st-24th December. How many Heads today would attend if the annual Conference was held at this time and involved lengthy and convoluted train journeys?!

Dr Richardson has written an immensely readable, always



interesting and also very important book. He helps us to reflect on where we have come from, and thereby to shape our thinking on where, and how, we are going. Thring was a great schoolmaster because he was concerned about every single pupil in his school and the development of the whole person.

In many respects the Uppingham he created is a model for what Mr Gove seeks to achieve for all our state secondary schools – independent (though that means different things to different people); highly focussed classroom teaching; extra-curricular activities for all and not simply the elite; firm discipline and structure.

There is actually not much new here. It is what independent schools have been doing for a long time; and it is why the Secretary of State is so keen to encourage them to become involved in the 'sponsorship' of state academies.

*Thring of Uppingham Victorian Educator* by Nigel Richardson is published by University of Buckingham Press (2014). ISBN 978-1-908684-0-59.

*David Gibbs is a former Headmaster of Chigwell School and was until recently education officer of the Skinners' Company. He has now retired and lives in Oxford.*

# Learning in a digitalized age

Alex McGrath is reassured by a guide, edited by Lawrence Burke, to the use of technology in the classroom

In Greek mythology, Prometheus was the Titan entrusted with creating man from clay. When Prometheus deceived Zeus in order to better the lives of men by bringing them meat and fire, he was punished by enduring everlasting torture. Zeus sent Pandora to men to exact his revenge further, and she unleashed all the evils of the world from which Prometheus had had the foresight to shield his creation. The one evil that remained behind was deceitful hope.

Much hope has been invested in technology in education, and much belief that it must improve the learning outcomes of children. But how much do we really know? As teachers, charged with developing children as they approach adulthood, moulding them and giving them the tools and sustenance to thrive, we often feel that our own judgement is being usurped by those in power. In the rapidly changing world of technological advancement in education, teachers can sometimes feel tormented by lack of consultation, lack of adequate training or recklessly unleashed initiatives.

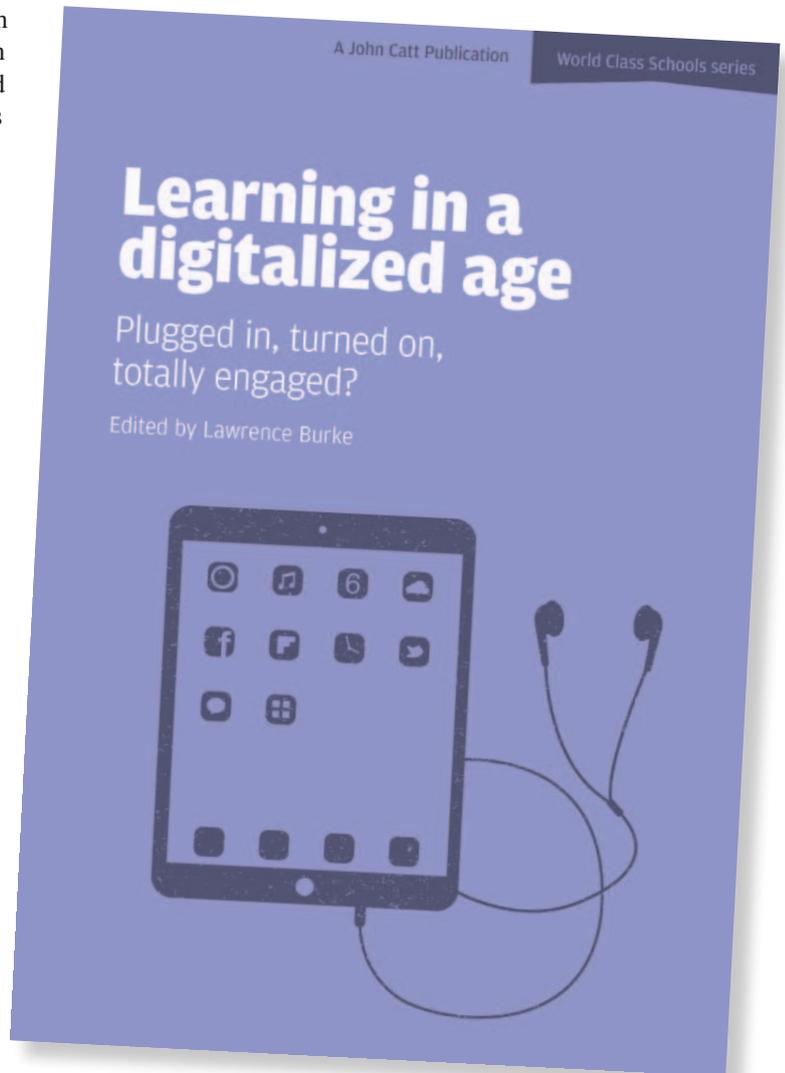
Lawrence Burke's book is an important antidote to our suffering. It empowers teachers with empirical research into the use of technology in classrooms around the world, from kindergarten to primary and from secondary to tertiary. This collection of initiatives, musings, action research and evidence has been gleaned from teachers who are using technology in their classrooms, and should be read by all, no matter how technologically advanced our own schools might be.

Those contributing the 19 chapters – each with its own focused case studies – hail from international schools worldwide. They represent educators from the Middle East, North America, India, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Canada, Egypt and Pakistan. There are few case studies from the UK, which I found disappointing, but perhaps that is a reflection of how conservative we are, and how far we have yet to travel.

It would also have been instructive to find out how things were working out in the rest of Europe, South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and China. Perhaps this is the virgin soil that will provide material for a second volume. To neglect these important areas does seem remiss – especially since China provides a quarter of the world's learners.

This point aside, here we have an eclectic collection from which any educator will be able to reap some fascinating information, empowering data, and pragmatic advice, in addition to 'cautionary tales on embracing the *wow factor* over critical pedagogy'.

My favourite chapters to read were those entitled 'iPad therefore iLearn?' by Michelle Rogers-Estable, Roudaina Houjeir and Dianne Evans, commenting on their work in the UAE. Following a wealth of research, data and comment, Evans sums up the power of the iPad thus: 'The iPad itself



will not provide improved learning without the effective conduit of the teacher and the support of the educational institution.'

This may seem blindingly obvious to any educator, but it is immensely reassuring that such a conclusion is grounded in specific research data and analysis. After all, as pointed out by Kasim Kasuri from Pakistan: 'The truth is most people believe that technology transforms learning.' This dangerous assumption is effectively challenged by this book.

This is not a volume for the nay-sayer, however. The chapters are full of advocates of elearning in all its forms, celebrating the successful integration of technology into the classroom and reassuring those who advocate its use. But what is different, welcome and refreshing is the critical attitude that accompanies the plaudits.

Rather than simply say "you have to get on the bandwagon", these writers – these teachers – tell us that we need to do

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## CLASSROOM IN THE CLOUD

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ALEX MCGRATH

# Classroom in the Cloud

**Seizing the advantage in the blended learning revolution**

By Alex McGrath

This exciting new book aims to focus the minds of teachers and school leaders to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the online revolution and the emergence of blended learning. With planning and co-ordination, huge benefits can be reaped from new ways of learning, complementing the traditions of British education.

Classroom in the Cloud looks at the implication for the UK of e-learning practices and techniques that have been introduced overseas and urges teachers and leaders to face the challenges posed by new technology and to embrace change.

Alex McGrath is the Head of King's Ely Senior. He is the author of **Lifting Our Heads** - The challenge facing our schools: a call-to-arms for the independent sector (2013), which is also available from John Catt Educational.

**Published October 13, 2014.**

**Available for pre-order at [www.johncatt.com](http://www.johncatt.com)**



Alex McGrath

it properly, thoughtfully and, most crucially, in a student-centred rather than device-centred approach. We are also reminded to be teacher-centred, and to assist and train those colleagues for whom this is all a bridge too far.

In summary, this is not actually a book about technology. ‘Technology isn’t the problem because it isn’t capable of making moral

and ethical decisions for us’, says Burke. This is a book about good learning and good teaching. It is a book about putting teachers at the forefront of the debate about what is going on in their classrooms. It is a book that celebrates the professionalism and agency of the teacher using the widest range of exciting resources available to him or her in the most innovative and yet discerning ways possible.

Burke makes the point that teachers must lead the debate, or the parameters of how we should teach will be set by the major educational book publishing houses and lead educational institutions, in most cases without any consultation of teachers, pupils or parents. Teachers have a vital role to play in pursuing a critical appraisal of the usefulness of technology.

God help us if those with government budgets or particular political ideologies decide that technology may somehow

provide more ‘efficient’ educational outcomes or enhance ‘performance’ without classroom-based evidence to back this up across the widest possible range of educational environments.

The deceitful hope that technology in itself creates a better world needs to be put back in the box. Teachers, concerned like Prometheus with enriching mankind, provide us with a real hope of developing good learning technology. They are capable of the foresight to protect us from blindly approaching expensive disaster if only we trust them and listen to the evidence of their experience.

This book makes the point that, at long last, education systems throughout the world are catching up with those of manufacturing, engineering, health and business at a dizzying speed. Such speed creates dangers, but these dangers are far from insurmountable. With correct stewardship, and by asking the right questions of those at the chalk face or the tablet screen, we can enrich the lives of our teachers and pupils, making learning in the 21st century more engaging and exciting than ever before.

This book is a must-read for teachers, school leaders, governors and policy-makers. It encourages us all to contribute more intelligently to the debate over the best use of technology within our schools.

*Learning in a digitalized age*, edited by Lawrence Burke, is published by John Catt ISBN 978-1-909717-084.

*Alex McGrath is Head of King’s Ely Senior and author of Lifting Our Heads (2013), published by John Catt.*

## 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](mailto:postmaster@dunbry.plus.com). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### St Swithun’s Greenpower team win bronze

St Swithun’s School Greenpower team competed in the Greenpower heats at the Goodwood motor racing circuit.

Changes to the St Swithun’s car, *Cobolt*, were tested at Goodwood in March, but this was the first proper race with the modified design. It was also the first time that the team had experienced the new 1½ hour race format with no battery changing. The changes paid off and the team finished third of the 45 teams.

St Swithun’s co-driver Lydia Robinson led the team of Georgina Penfold, Amy Dennison, Maggie Chen, Izzy Poultney and Jocelyn Ramm. The team now progress to the next heat at Castle Coombe in September, followed by the final in October.

The Greenpower Education Trust’s objective is to advance education in sustainable engineering and technology for young people. Electric car racing events challenge students to design, build and race cars under guidance of teachers and mentors.



# Quick wit

Christopher Martin observes  
the power of the pulpit

Clerics are natural targets for those inoculated against preaching. Standing in a pulpit six feet above contradiction can tend to endorse one's assumption that everyone in your congregation is on the same page as you.

The delusion of the priest in a Victorian church deep in rural England is not isolated. Addressing a group of half a dozen somnolent yokels, he is reported to have started his sermon thus: "As those of you who have been to Thermopylae will remember..."

Playing the God card comes naturally to them, of course, but it can be overplayed. Lord Soper, a busy evangelist, was trying to park his car, without success. Eventually he parked on a yellow line, leaving a note on the windscreen for the parking attendant which read: 'I've been round this square 15 times – dismay – forgive us our trespasses.' On his return he found a parking ticket and another note. 'I've been round this square for 15 years. Lead us not into temptation.'

Given the hot line to Heaven claimed by priests of all hues, it was only going to be a matter of time before someone claimed infallibility. This was Pius IV only 200 years ago, but subsequent Popes have latched on to the idea with various degrees of enthusiasm. Still, if you're going to be infallible, you'd better not make a mistake...

There's a cautionary note in there somewhere, as there was also in the observation of Algernon Grievess, for many years the Dean's verger at Westminster Abbey. In his view the only way to clear the Abbey was to announce that a service would take place. His views on clergy were acerbic, but the human race generally failed to excite him. Asked in a radio broadcast when he preferred to be in the Abbey, he responded with deadpan conviction, "At night – when there are only 2000 people there – all dead."

The church is often described as being in a state of retreat from reality, and recent struggles with sexuality and women bishops would seem to confirm this view. Things lurking beneath the cassock tend to preoccupy churchmen of various hues, leaving them a lot less time to concern themselves with everything else.

In the past however, it has been much more militant, as shown in the Bayeux tapestry where Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, is seen prodding his soldiers forward against the foe with the tip of his spear. The Latin text is perhaps best rendered by: 'The Bishop encourages his troops.'

Modern prelates have different battles to wage, not least against technology. The Bishop of Manchester, starting the Eucharist in one of his parishes is reported to have had a problem making himself heard and eventually gave up. "There seems to be something wrong with this microphone," he



Christopher Martin

sighed, tapping it exploratively. At which the well rehearsed congregation intoned together, "And also with you."

Not that others are immune to such garrulous clerical temptations. General de Gaulle, invited to open the *Comices Agricoles* in a rural village, found himself at the mercy of the mayor who, determined to make the most of his moment in the sun, spoke passionately for half-an-hour before finally turning to the infuriated general, asking him, "*Monsieur le Président, veuillez prononcer votre adresse.*" Apparently de Gaulle rose to his feet, declared in his characteristically ringing tones "*Le Palais de l'Elysée*" – and left.

William Harrison gave the longest inaugural presidential address in 1841, lasting an hour and three-quarters. It was a bitterly cold day and the temperature, together with the effort, may have left him exhausted. In any event, he retired to bed and died 30 days later.

He should perhaps have drawn inspiration from George Washington, whose second inaugural speech was only 135 words long. Only Calvin Coolidge can beat him for brevity, for when asked if he had a message for the nation, replied, "No". Coolidge had the gift of inaction to the point where, when it was announced that he had died, Dorothy Parker was moved to ask, "How can they tell?"

He should have cultivated a more pugnacious approach as advised by John Major. "When your back's to the wall, it's time to turn round and fight."

*Christopher Martin taught at Westminster and was Head Master of Bristol Cathedral School and Millfield.*



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