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Volume 52 Number 1
Spring 2015

Contents

Editorial 5

Abroad
Educating girls – Mary Ward's Catholic legacy, *Charlotte Avery* 7
Gegen den Strom schwimmen, *Helen Smail* 10
Britain's European century? *Patrick Tobin* 13
Cambridge International Examinations, going global, *Peter Monteath* 15

Only connect
Agglutinative morphology and other tricks of the Turkish tongue, *Oliver Sayeed* 18
An imagined Englishness, *Cathy Taylor* 20
Time for a joint conference or a bridge too far? *Jonathan Whybrow* 22

War
Remembering Bugler Boy Timmins 23
Promethean women in the Great War, *Christopher Martin* 24
Their name liveth for evermore, *Sarah Wearne* 26

Stress
Fencing the cliff, *Anthony McLellan* 29
What's so special about teenage stress, *Nicola Morgan* 30
Us versus them or harmonious triangle? *Sara Pullman* 33

School
Girls go Gold 35
Linearity rules – for now, *Kevin Stannard* 38
Flipping homework or flipping learning? *Rod Jackson* 40
Third formers thrive on the Trivium 42
Back to the Future at Framlingham College 44

Common Room
Managing to Lead, *John Weiner* 46
Changing the drum beat, *Delyth Lynch* 49
Are teachers saving enough for retirement? 53

Book review
Classroom in the Cloud, *Cat Scutt* 55

Endpiece
Quick wit, *Christopher Martin* 57

In the language laboratory.
See page 10.

PRESENTATIONS TO SCHOOLS

The McLellan Practice

ALCOHOL AWARENESS (What can be known should be known)	ANTHONY McLELLAN
AFTER 'THE GOWNS OF RADLEY' (From syringes, cardboard and courts to Government Advisor)	CHIP SOMERS
ILLEGAL OR LEGAL – KNOW THE RISKS (Drugs Education for all age groups)	BOB TAIT and BARRY EVANS
FROM EVERYTHING TO NOTHING (Rebuilding my life after Drug Addiction)	OLI HENDERSON
BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DRINK (How it was... What happened... How it is now)	JIM SMITH
SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT DRUGS? (Myths exploded and the facts laid bare)	MANDY SALIGARI
SMOKING - IT'S YOUR CHOICE (To start or to stop - you decide)	ROGER HARDING
SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS (Let's talk)	ROZ BICEN
POSITIVE VOICE (HIV/AIDS – knowledge saves lives)	EMMA COLE
LOVE THE SKIN YOU'RE IN (Body Image, Self Esteem, Body Confidence)	NATASHA DEVON
MEALTIMES AND MILESTONES (Moving on from Anorexia)	CONSTANCE BARTER
FOOD FOR LIFE (How a small change in diet can affect every aspect of your life)	TINA LOND-CAULK
SHORT SLEEVES, HAPPY MINDS (Helping to understand Self Harm among young people)	NATASHA DEVON
GRIEF ENCOUNTER (Talking to Teens about Bereavement)	ROZ BICEN
R.T.A. – NOT JUST ANOTHER STATISTIC (Change the way you think about Driving)	JOHN ALLEN
HARD TIME (From stock market millionaire to America's toughest jail)	SHAUN ATTWOOD
BANGED UP ABROAD (Teacher, drug smuggler, convict, graduate)	SANDRA GREGORY
INSIDE OUT (Crime, prisons and offenders - the role the arts can play)	ANGELA FINDLAY
A NEW LIFE WITH DISABILITIES (Helicopter down cuts short military career)	STEVE PENDLETON
PICTURING WAR (Conflict Photography from the Front Line)	RICK FINDLER
RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES (Using Life Lessons Learned through Sport to Survive)	JOHN HOSKISON
BULLYING (Fists and words leave bruises)	ROBERT HIGGS
ON THE TURN OF A CARD (Compulsive gambling costs you more than just money)	STEVE ANDREWS
LIFE LESSONS (A self-help talk like no other)	SHAUN ATTWOOD
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (Nobody plans to fail – they just fail to plan)	ROGER HARDING
PREPARING FOR INDEPENDENCE (Life skills for leaving home)	ROGER HARDING
THE SECOND WORLD WAR: THE OTHER SIDE (Seen through the eyes of an ordinary German family)	ANGELA FINDLAY
PARENTS – PARENTING FOR PREVENTION (Life skills for leaving home)	MANDY SALIGARI

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Editorial

As the Scottish referendum passes from the ballot box to the history books, one of its unique features may be of particular interest to pupils in school. For the first time in this country the voting age in a nationally significant plebiscite was extended to 16 and 17 year-olds. The exceptionally high degree of interest the issue of Scottish independence generated amongst its (admittedly limited) electorate may lead these new young voters to expect the same again in the General Election scheduled for 7th May, 2015.

The referendum campaign stimulated genuine, articulate and fair debate. People listened and made their minds up after listening and Scots high-mindedness could be seen in action. Of course not everyone behaved like this, and, in the days and weeks that have followed 18th September, the matter has returned to ground level, to party politics, and to a confusion of motives, interests, practicalities and procrastinations. Any Head Teacher who has ever been lumbered with the results of a poorly planned parental questionnaire will be familiar with the territory.

Yet the generation that acquired the vote that day will have to deal with the constitutional issues the referendum raised and with the question of how political power is deployed. They will not just have to sort out Westminster versus the rest, nationalism, provincialism, federalism and separatism, but also this country's relationship with Europe. It's possible that a referendum on this issue lurks ahead, one that will affect them for much longer than their parents and teachers, and one on which, as things stand, they will not be entitled to vote.

If one chose to make the sort of simplistic distinctions beloved of some national newspapers and some fringe politicians, our schools encourage global thinking rather than introspection in their students. Schools recognise that things have changed and are constantly changing and that today's pupils need and are given skills to meet the challenge of the new. Gender stereotypes are weakening and multi-cultural influences are inescapably being felt. Schools are far more pastorally aware than they used to be and, as societies, they are not inhibited from proclaiming their values.

Headlines, whether in newspapers, the mouths of politicians or the minds of bureaucrats, do not tell the whole story. As George Eliot wrote at the end of *Middlemarch*, 'that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number of people who lived faithfully a hidden life…' hidden, that is, away from the headlines, in the classrooms, libraries, study centres and social spaces of our schools.

Relationships are crucial to the good functioning of any society, large or small. In this issue, John Whybrow suggests that an occasional joint conference of all the independent school associations would be a good thing. So too, of course, if only it could be achieved beyond the excellent example of ASCL, would be joint conferences for teachers and school leaders from both sectors.

John Weiner points out the need for good management as well as good leadership, the sharing of the responsibility for making sure that things go well. Schools are now far better aware than they used to be of the stresses that teenagers experience, from social pressures, from the availability of drugs and alcohol, and from tensions with their parents, their teachers and their peers. Anthony McLellan and Nicola Morgan remind us of the dangers that teenagers may find at the extremes of everyday life. It is vital that their parents and their teachers work together and respect each other, as Sara Pullman, teacher and fee-paying parent points out, lest 'Us versus Them' be allowed to fracture the harmonious triangle.

As Patrick Tobin suggests in his article taken from an address to the European teachers joining this year's HMC Projects cohort, the last century was Britain's

Editorial

European century. Britain may have been more involved in Europe at that time, but the involvement was often painful and sometimes near disastrous.

Unwillingly to war with Germany twice, burdened with debts that have only been paid off in the last few months, imperial possessions and pretensions removed, rebuffed by Europe when first applying to join the Common Market, Britain's relationship with Europe was bruising and demoralising. Having finally joined the European Union, our membership is, supposedly, under review, as politicians seek to gain votes by casting widely to land the elusive shoal of popular approval.

However, the demand for an education that will prepare our children for work in a global market seems to be genuinely recognised by teachers, educationists, parents and the students themselves. It is even a mantra to be found on the lips of most politicians, including the present, the former and the opposition holders of the education portfolio. It is a pity that students seem unwilling to learn German, but there are ways of addressing that, at least according to Heather Smail.

In Cambridge there is a whole examinations board dedicated to the international approach, already offering qualifications that are expressly adapted to a global market. And the internationalism to which we are, perhaps, aspiring, is not new. Mary Ward walked all over Europe 400 years ago, establishing schools and implanting an educational philosophy that still thrives today.

HERE & THERE

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

How traditional teaching meets digital learning

Loughborough High School, part of Loughborough Endowed Schools, will host a special conference on Tuesday, 10th February, 2015 entitled 'A Tablet for Every Pupil', to share their experiences with schools considering the deployment of tablets to pupils and teachers.

Genius bar

It was one of the first independent schools in the country to go 1:1 with iPad, and this conference is an opportunity for school decision-makers to hear more about the project. A speaker from Apple will deliver the keynote session, and staff from the school will discuss issues surrounding their IT vision including finance, governance, technical insights and teaching and learning.

Headmistress Gwen Byrom believes IT provision varies depending on the needs of pupils, staff and parents and the vision of the individual school. "To achieve the rollout of iPads there was a significant amount of work to do on our IT infrastructure. We also worked to establish our philosophy regarding filtering and use of devices in the classroom, how we converted this into our policies and how we would communicate the roll out to parents. We see this not as a one-off capital investment but as a fundamental and evolving part of school life. Our pupils have played a key role in this and they also staff our help desk. I'm sure that as new generations of devices come along they will be the first to show them to us!"

A former study area at the High School has now been transformed into a student-led iPad help facility called the Genius Bar, providing device and app support to pupils and staff during lunchtimes. The Genii, as they are known, have helped set up iPads during the roll out, led workshops for parents, and provided support for teachers and students in the classroom.

Dr Sue Jackson, director of studies at the school and iPad project lead, said the idea behind the facility is to use the students' digital knowledge to educate others. "Teachers are experts in education and we don't want them to feel forced into becoming IT experts as well. Their acknowledgement of student expertise and willingness to learn from students and allow pupils to learn from each other makes the iPad project a partnership."

Educating girls – Mary Ward's Catholic legacy

Charlotte Avery describes an early journey in international education

Mary Ward (1585-1645) was born in Ripon, Yorkshire, a county where strong Roman Catholic communities had survived the Reformation. Protestant rioters burned down the family house and two of her uncles were involved in the Guy Fawkes conspiracy.

Mary entered the Poor Clares in St Omer in France, but chose not to become a contemplative. Instead she founded a new monastery for English women and set about establishing schools for girls. Her order did not require its members to wear the nun's habit and positively encouraged them to range beyond the enclosure, which aroused mixed feelings.

Although the mission to found schools proved popular and successful, the Roman Catholic Church maintained a centuries-long reserve about the order, not least because of its evident links with the Jesuits. The first institute was suppressed, but somehow this did not stop its development and Mary Ward walked the length and breadth of Europe founding schools. In this, she did not neglect the country of her birth, establishing a convent near York towards the end of her life, where she died in St Mary's School, being buried in Osbaldwick Churchyard, widely mourned by local Roman Catholics and Anglicans alike.

Mary Ward's legacy in the 21st century may be found in two organisations – the *Congregatio Jesu* and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Members of the latter became known as the Sisters of Loreto and they operate 150 schools across the world, in Africa, Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, the UK and Gibraltar, educating 70,000 students. There are roughly 2000 sisters working in 24 countries in four continents, with an international centre in Rome where the General Superior, Sister Jane Livesey, formerly Headmistress of St Mary's School, Shaftesbury, is based with the staff of the Casa Generalizia of the Congregatio Jesu.

Mary Ward stands as one of the greatest pioneers of education for women and she is probably responsible for the creation and maintenance of more schools than anyone else, male or female.

St Mary's School, Cambridge

One of the Mary Ward schools is St Mary's School, Cambridge. A Christian school in the Catholic tradition, St Mary's School, Cambridge, has a unique approach to education and an atmosphere which fosters a love of life and learning, while growing the academic talents and spiritual wellbeing of each individual girl from within.

St Mary's School, Cambridge, is the only independent all-girls school in Cambridgeshire. Situated in the heart of the academically and culturally vibrant city of Cambridge, the school celebrated its 115th anniversary last year, and puts its success largely down to maintaining these long standing traditional values. The Headmistress, Charlotte Avery, explains the keys to the school's success:

All-girls school

I believe that the single sex environment of our school, where education provision is tailored specifically for girls' needs, serves to allow the girls to be happy, confident and successful. We provide renowned pastoral care, understanding and individual support.

While national trends have shown that the majority of girls don't choose to pursue STEM subjects in school and if they do, they do not achieve as highly as boys, 70% of our girls have achieved an A* or A in A level mathematics this year, and 100% achieved this grading in further mathematics. This bucks a well-entrenched national trend for yet another year.

Our commitment to offering education for children from junior through to senior and sixth form levels, has been a priority since the school's inception, as has offering provision for boarding for those who will benefit from it. There are 160 girls in our junior school, 400 girls in the senior school and 100 in our sixth form. Reflecting the cosmopolitan community of Cambridge, we have boarders and daygirls joining our community from 34 countries around the world.

Diverse subject choices are available across the school and sixth form students are encouraged to be confident in choosing physics A level alongside photography A level, chemistry alongside classical civilisation, and mathematics alongside French. We have recently introduced food technology, which joins our well-established textiles provision in the technology department, and a new computing science GCSE and A level is on offer as the 'fourth science'.

In addition to the school's freedom to tailor its provision for girls' academic needs, we are also able to respond to concerns about girls' involvement in sport and fitness at all ages, and to encourage and support our girls in pursuing their passions across a wide number of sports at school, county and national levels.

Christian school in the Catholic tradition

The Catholic ethos of St Mary's School, Cambridge, underpins every aspect of our working environment. We believe that each girl is a God given gift to be cherished, and a unique value is therefore placed on every individual student here. Our emphasis on Catholic values gives the school a refreshing outlook, focusing the girls on 'being', rather than 'having', and modelling key values within them such as resilience and humility.

We encourage girls to look beyond themselves, so that they enter adulthood aspiring to be more and to give more, not just to have more. The Christian focus manifests itself in many ways at the school, not least in our outstanding

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Mary Ward, pioneer and pride of pupils.

reputation for pastoral care, as well as excellent value-added results for a broad academic intake.

Based on the principle that parents are the first educator of their child, we invest heavily in relationships with parents, creating a highly successful partnership, as evidenced by the 97% parental satisfaction rate on average recorded throughout the latest ISI questionnaire.

We have generous bursary and scholarship programmes, including Ogden Trust awards, which have successfully equipped the first scholar to read mathematics at her first choice of university in Sheffield. We also have a long-standing tradition of raising money for charities, and the school's focus on compassion has led to awareness and fund raising activity across the school, with over £20,000 being raised last year alone.

Mary Ward family of schools

Building on our 400 year heritage, the school belongs to an active international network of over 200 Mary Ward schools worldwide, presenting many exciting and innovative opportunities for our students. Many families who send their daughters to St Mary's School, Cambridge, have links to the school or its sister schools, via mothers, aunts or grandmothers. There are very strong family connections and loyalties, with several families having connections stretching back three generations, and others who have sent five daughters to the school!

Traditionally the school's strongest links have been with *Congregatio Jesu* sister schools in the UK, namely St Mary's School, Ascot, St Mary's School, Hampstead, and St Mary's School, Shaftesbury, but new links are being forged with Loreto sister schools in the UK including in St Albans and in Manchester, as well as those in Germany, Ireland and Australia.

Mary Ward role model

In the 17th century Mary Ward was a Malala figure and in today's society she might be described as a radical feminist! Her vision for women was that they should have the same education and value as men were afforded: 'By God's grace, women in time to come will do much.' She petitioned three different Popes to have her Institute recognised, and was imprisoned and excommunicated for her radical work.

Mary Ward schools hold true to 12 characteristics which are derived from Mary Ward's teachings, including coping effectively with failure, seeing the good in all creation, embracing diversity, valuing friendship and pursuing cheerfulness, and working to eliminate injustice. Mary Ward is a wonderful role model for young and aspiring female minds and her work and character are profiled and celebrated throughout the school.

The future for the school, its pupils and the Mary Ward family

As part of the Mary Ward family, we are participating in the creation of an online Mary Ward Resources Document Library. The portal will include shared resources, from aspects of school administration, teaching, lesson plans and events, to assemblies, retreat material and videos of liturgies.

There will also be Mary Ward talks, a spotlight on a different school each month, and exchange opportunities between schools with links to school websites. This is a truly innovative and exciting initiative that will open up a whole new world of opportunities from which our school, the girls and our staff will benefit.

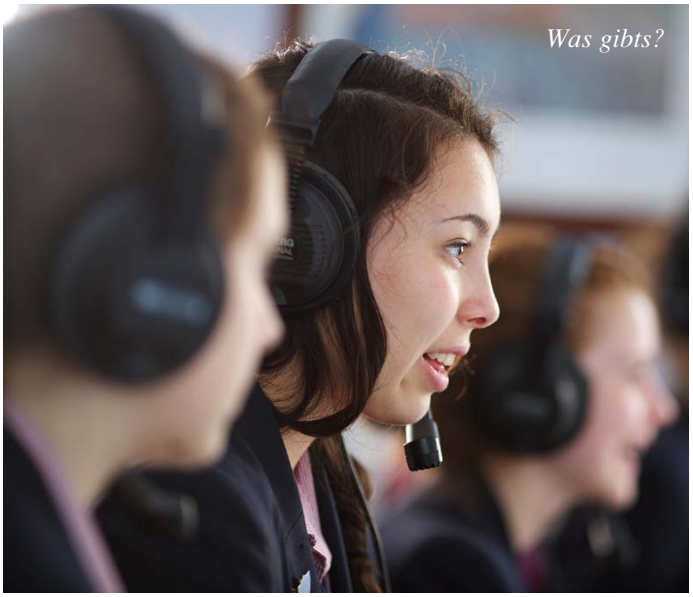
An alumna of St Paul's Girls' School and St Anne's College, Oxford, Charlotte Avery has been Headmistress of St Mary's School, Cambridge, for the past seven years.

Gegen den Strom schwimmen

Helen Smail describes how Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls is maintaining a flourishing German department

Dwindling pupil numbers for German; a subject which is too difficult; the elusive A* at A level; claims that all Germans speak English … this is the negative back-drop against which teachers of German have had to work in recent years.

It is, however, not all doom and gloom. At Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls (HMSG), numbers have been buoyant for some years now, with around 40 pupils from an average Year 10 cohort of 80 having opted for it at GCSE since 2010. The numbers for AS have been about 15 for the last two years, and even more chose the subject for September 2014.



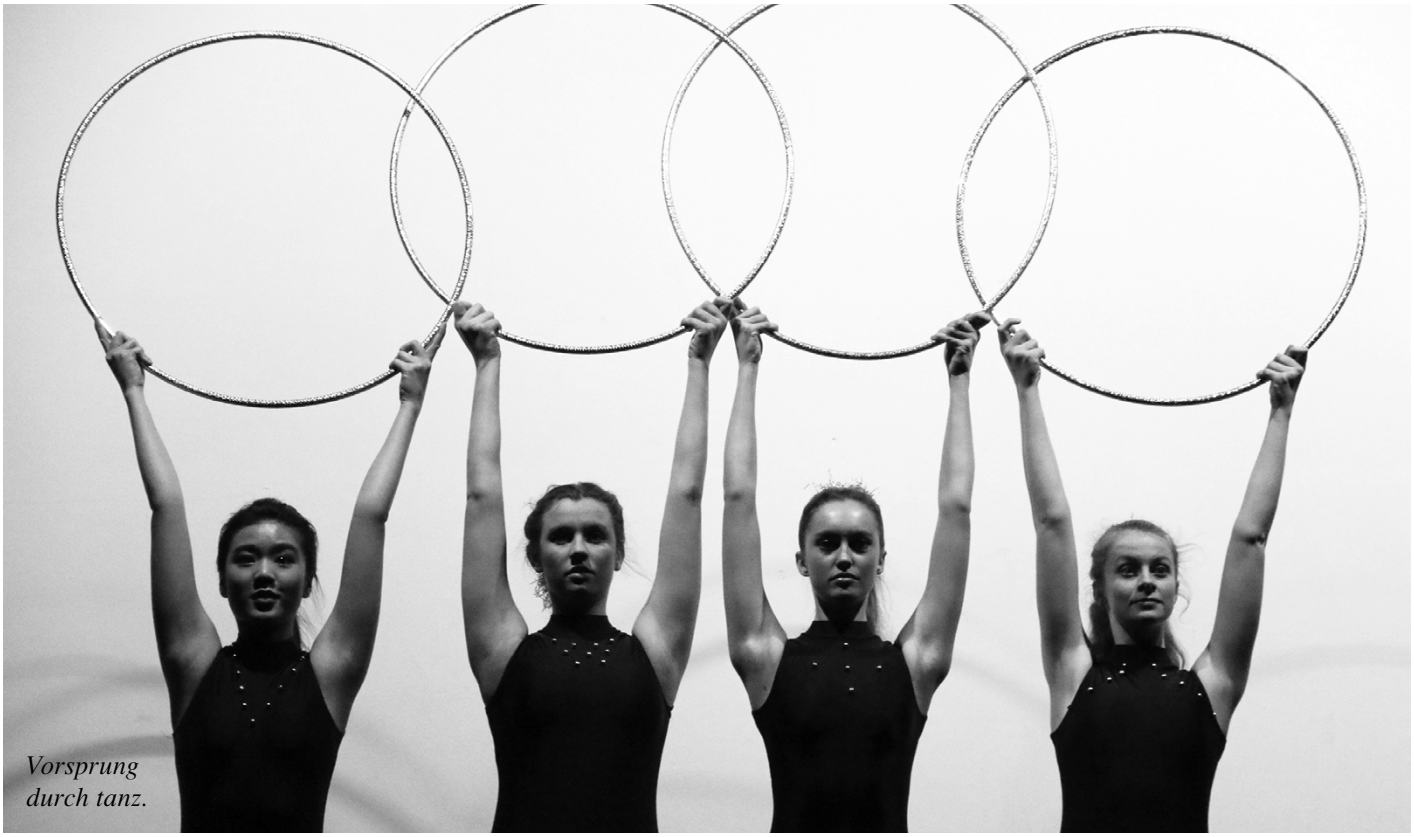
Was gibts?

There is no doubt that pupils are beginning to appreciate the need for German, especially in the workplace. The German economy is strong and, in a competitive business market, employers value competent German speakers. The German-speaking world is the UK's biggest trading partner outside the USA.

Whilst Germans may well have good English, there are also advantages in understanding the language and, more particularly, the thought-processes of one's trading partner. Additionally, German is spoken as a native language by around 120 million people worldwide. As a major EU official language and a *lingua franca* across much of central and eastern Europe, the advantages of understanding German are clear.

As pupils pursue their school career at HMSG, the huge cultural impact of German literature, philosophy, art and film becomes apparent to them. Former pupils who go on to study at university report that whether they are studying philosophy, film studies, comparative literature or history of art, inevitably they are faced with the significance of German culture and the advantage of acquiring, at the very least, a reading knowledge of German.

There is also a growing awareness amongst our pupils that the transferable skills learned via a language are extremely



Vorsprung durch tanz.

In the language laboratory.

valuable to a future employer. Learning any modern foreign language will improve communication skills and confidence and sensitize the language-learner to different cultures.

If German, as some claim, is more complex or difficult than some other European languages, this can also work in favour of the language, since the high degree of problem-solving, the level of analysis and the eye for accuracy required when learning this language are skills much in demand by employers.

At HMSG all pupils study German as the second modern foreign language in Year 8. They quickly see the links with English and, as their German increases, they appreciate the logic and entrenched rules of this language.

To draw pupils' attention to the importance of learning German, support is available. The UK-German Connection, for example, offers a wide variety of courses and scholarships. HMSG has recently achieved success in their scholarships programme and two years ago the UK-German Youth Ambassadors programme. Additionally, the Instant Impact Grant offered by the organisation allowed a taster-trip for Year 10 pupils to Germany, which, in turn, has led to an annual school exchange.

Last year it was rewarding to have the creative work of Year 9 pupils acknowledged by The Oxford Network, another organisation that provides support via extended and engaging challenges to pupils across the age range.

Making contact with universities has proved a positive way for pupils to appreciate the benefits of learning a language. One university with a very pro-active approach to this is Bristol. In January, a visiting lecturer in German delivered a master class on aspects of East Germany to sixth formers, a good example of the cross-curricular learning strongly encouraged at HMSG.

Another initiative has been a creative and innovative project that united the German and Dance departments, portraying German history between 1930 and 1990 via dance. The project culminated in a spectacular show involving 120 pupils across all age groups. Performances were enhanced by drawing on pupils' additional instrumental, singing and dramatic talents and was part sponsored by Audi to foster the link with modern Germany.

It is clear that there are plenty of good reasons for studying German and that, in spite of negative trends and attitudes, learning German is relevant and worthwhile. Considerable support from external agencies is available, which helps to enthuse and motivate pupils. Pupils are seeing the relevance of this subject and it is possible to buck the trend or, as they say in Germany, *gegen den Strom schwimmen*.

Helen Smail is head of German at Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls.

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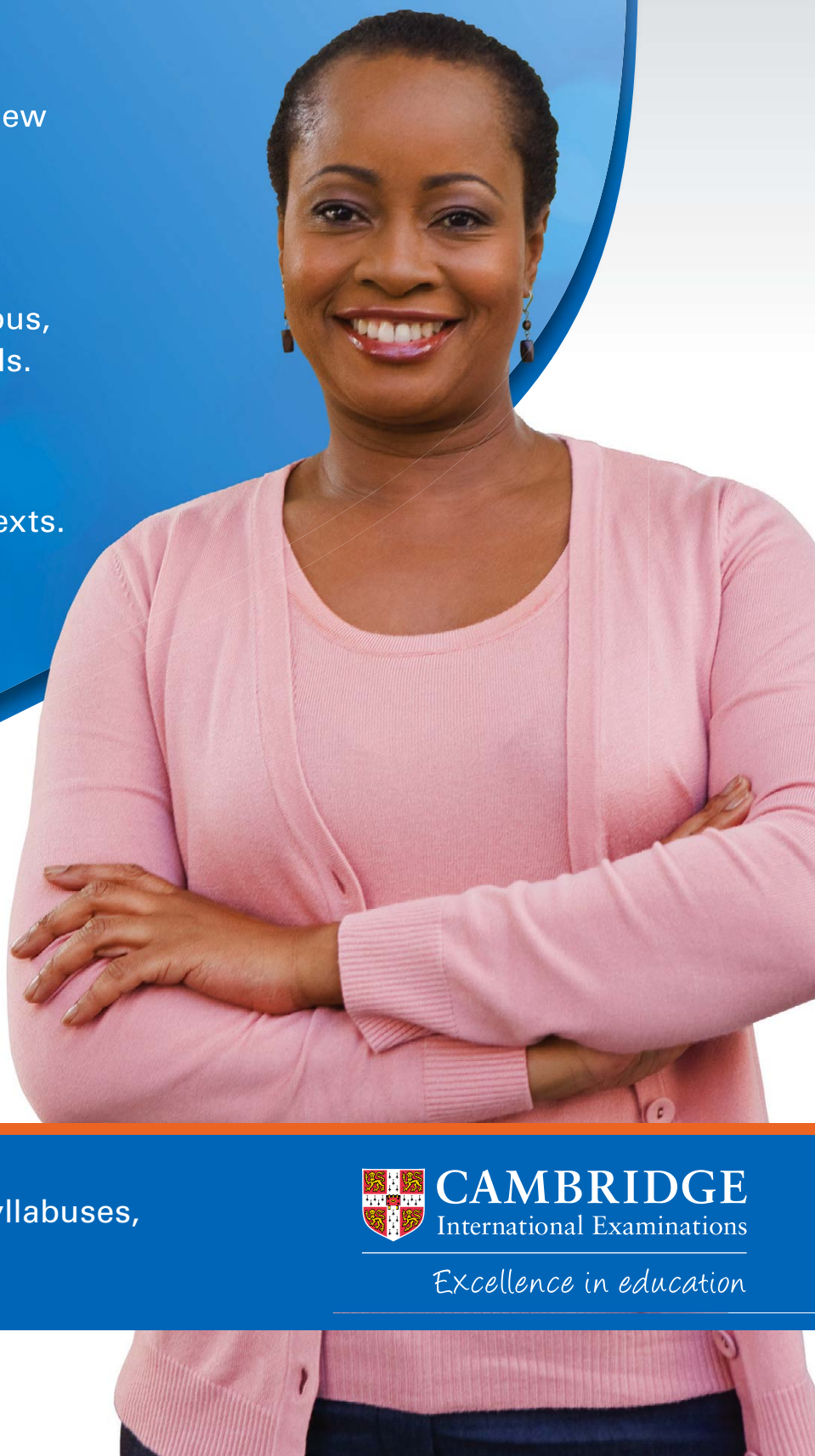

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In or out of Europe? Kiev ponders the new Eastern question.

Britain's European century?

An abridged version of Patrick Tobin's address to the latest cohort of European teachers participating in the HMC Projects

We will all have had our reasons for engaging with HMC Projects. For me, in two senses, it goes back to the old Yugoslavia. In 1966, 1968 and 1969 I drove to Istanbul and beyond, delighting in visiting so much that was beautiful in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

My bible and inspiration was *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, a remarkable book by the British novelist Rebecca West. It records her travels through Yugoslavia in 1936, journeys in which she engaged with an astonishing range and number of people, including some who had been in Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914, and who had seen the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie going towards their pitiful end at that street junction off the Appel Quay. It is a book remarkable for its passionate humanity, intellectual curiosity … and pro-Serbian bias!

Over 20 years later, the break-up of Yugoslavia brought the horrors of civil war to Bosnia. As Principal of two Edinburgh schools I persuaded my governors to offer places to six young Bosnians, with accommodation gladly provided by current parents. This was the sort of local initiative that coalesced into what is now HMC Projects.

There is a sense in which none of us would be here today had it not been for what happened in Sarajevo in June 1914. It

is arguable that there would have been a great war in any case – a showdown between rival powers fearful and suspicious of one another and busily arming themselves for conflict.

That is not, however, the conclusion of an Australian Oxford historian, Christopher Clark, in his superb and magisterial account of the causes of the First World War. His title *The Sleepwalkers* expresses his understanding of what happened in 1914.

A Bulgarian historian said of 1914 that the question 'why?' always carries with it the implication that someone is guilty. Was it Austria for sending the ultimatum to Serbia? Was it Germany for believing that if war had to come sooner or later it must be fought sooner if only to avoid a war on two fronts? Clark argues persuasively that, in the general spiral towards Armageddon in July 1914, France and Russia were more bullish than Germany and that Britain failed at the crucial moment to urge restraint and head her allies away from the precipice.

The guns for the Sarajevo assassins came from the main Serbian arsenal. Clark portrays Serbia – rather like Putin's Russia today – as recklessly subverting Austrian rule in Bosnia and conniving with the terrorist plans of pro-Serbian separatists. Europe's leaders blundered into war.

As I see it, *The Sleepwalkers* finally demolishes Article 231 of the 1919 Versailles Peace treaty, the clause that made Germany and Austria-Hungary responsible for the outbreak of war. That verdict led to the imposition of savage, unpayable and ultimately unpaid reparations on Germany and, 20 years after Versailles, a second world war had begun. One of the main reasons why the League of Nations established at Versailles had failed to keep the peace was the decision of the United States Congress to boycott the League.

Isolationism does not pay. That was the lesson grasped by the western statesmen who had to rebuild after 1945. We owe to them the United Nations, NATO, the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights. Economic lessons were learned too. This time there were no reparations. The Americans instead rebuilt western Germany with Marshall Aid.

And, because the failure of inter-war democracy had macro-economic roots, with arteries badly clogged by adherence to the old Gold Standard, they sensed that a new world order in global finance had to be devised. In the summer of 1944, just after the landings in Normandy, allied representatives met in a huge conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, on which rested the remarkable recovery of the West after 1945. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were both important outcomes of the conference, but no-one was able to salvage the economic independence of Britain, nor was America inclined to do so.

Although Britain remains, at least in its own eyes, a staunch ally of the United States and seeks to play a major role on the international stage, isolationism is back in fashion – and at a time when there seems a very great risk of descent into international anarchy.

Both American and British foreign policy is caught on the horns of many dilemmas and the only clear message is 'damned if you do and damned if you don't'. And, closer to home, if David Cameron is still Prime Minister after the next General Election he has promised an in-out referendum on whether or not Britain should remain in the European Union.

British xenophobia is not confined to Europe. Whilst we pride ourselves on being a multicultural society flourishing under the benign tradition of 'British values', the question 'whose British values?' is being raised more and more often. This is partly because of the rich variety of cultural, religious, racial and social attitudes and traditions to be found in every British town and city.

Poland, the country on whose behalf, in theory, Britain went to war with Germany in 1939, is a prime example of our current confusion. When Poland joined the European Union, all the existing member states had to decide whether to allow free access to all who sought work in their countries or to exercise the right to leave barriers in place for a period of transition.

Britain, Ireland and Sweden alone decided on free access. How many workers were expected? The British government doubted whether many would come, perhaps 15,000. The final number? Nobody really knows – possibly 600,000. The latest estimate is that there are now over 1 million Poles living in Britain, a country whose social fabric is under strain.

There is a desperate shortage of affordable housing, especially for new buyers. The National Health Service is at the centre of constant political debate and is having to deal with an inexorably rising and ageing population.

The latest figures indicate that the UK's population is increasing at a much faster rate than elsewhere in Europe and that we have the highest birth rate in Europe, which will make more demands on our health and education services. One in four of the babies born in Britain in 2012 had parents not born in Britain, with Poles leading the way.

On the other hand, and still with Poles leading the way, the influx of a skilled and hard-working labour force, ready to accept employment on terms and pay that might have been shunned by British workers, has undoubtedly been a boon to business and to British homeowners. The Polish plumber has rapidly achieved legendary status!

Whilst insularity is an essential part of being British, we have enjoyed enormous benefits from overseas enterprises. After two world wars and the loss of empire, we have finally joined Europe, albeit with reservations which may, perhaps, prove terminal.

Despite hostility towards 'Brussels', we have become more European than we like to acknowledge. We may talk about 'Europe' as if it was somewhere else, but we love to go there. Over 10,000 British now own properties in Bulgaria, a figure that may be multiplied several times over for Spain. There are, therefore, grounds for hope that our insularity may not topple over into full-blown isolationism.

Because Europe is important. It is, not surprisingly, the leaders of the countries of eastern Europe who are strongest in reminding the west of the lessons of history and of the need to remain united in the face of military threats and aggression. They have little patience or sympathy with the isolationist approach to Europe voiced by so many British Conservatives today. As the current Polish Foreign Minister, Radoslaw Sikorski (himself educated in Britain) has said:

> Please don't expect us to help you wreck or paralyse the EU. Don't underestimate our determination not to return to the politics of the 20th century. You were not occupied. Most of us on the continent were. We'll do almost anything to prevent it happening again.

Patrick Tobin was Chairman of HMC in 1998 and was one of the founding fathers of the HMC Projects.

Cambridge International Examinations, going global

Resourcing a worldwide education community: Peter Monteath describes an international option for AS and A levels

Peter Monteath

Education has dominated headlines in the UK for a long time now as a big national topic and, as an international exam board, we see countries around the world dealing with similar challenges to provide the best education for their young people.

However, for many schools and students around the globe, an international education is providing the solution as well as playing a larger part in the mix of syllabuses available to UK schools. Increasingly young people see no borders or boundaries to their education. They want the opportunity to get into the world's leading universities wherever they may be, and many see international education as a means to achieving it.

In the UK, recent reports from the Independent Schools Council (ISC) show that almost 40% of entries made by their schools' 16 year-olds this summer were for IGCSEs as opposed to the domestic GCSE. Other reports over the summer have explored the growing popularity of international qualifications at post-16 within the UK independent sector.

It is a pattern that we are seeing across the world, where the interest in international curriculum and qualifications keeps growing. We can only speak from our own perspective, but we now operate in 160 countries, working with 10,000 schools. Cambridge IGCSE is the most widely taken qualification in the world with 760,000 subject entries each year. Cambridge International AS and A levels are taught in more than 2000 schools in 127 countries.

With activities in such a large number of countries, we work with state schools, private schools, newly emerging nations and long-established economies. We have developed and introduced new education and assessment systems in countries such as Egypt and Bahrain and supported a range of countries in raising educational standards, from education initiatives in the US to more comprehensive reform projects in countries such as Mongolia and Kazakhstan.

Our syllabuses are always taught in English and many schools around the world use Cambridge programmes and qualifications as the English-medium strand of a bilingual education programme. We are working with schools on bilingual education projects in Argentina, Bosnia, Croatia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

For us, bilingual education is the practice of studying typical school subjects, like geography and maths, through a second or additional language. In Kazakhstan we are supporting the introduction of trilingual education – English, Russian and Kazakh.

In the UK, the desire to provide an international education does feature in schools' decision-making, but schools also tell us that they often develop their curricula syllabus by syllabus, judging each on its own merits.

We have seen more and more schools in the UK choosing Cambridge IGCSE over the last four years. In 2010, a number of our syllabuses were made available for teaching in state schools, whilst independent schools have been taking up IGCSE in more and more subjects. In 2010 around 14,000 entries were being made in the UK and we now work with 2500 UK schools. IGCSEs have been used internationally for more than 25 years, and we receive over 500,000 Cambridge IGCSE entries every year.

Assessment of Cambridge IGCSE has always been linear, which allows students to develop through the course and take the exams when their understanding and skills are more mature. Each syllabus is redeveloped to keep it current on a published timescale, which means schools can map out their future curricula safe in the knowledge that Cambridge IGCSEs sit outside the UK system and therefore outside governmental changes.

The same is true of Cambridge International AS and A levels. These were designed to offer the international market an equivalent to the UK A level, with AS level counting towards an A level, but always linear and assessed at the end of each year. They are not regulated for use in UK state schools but, as the recent reports note, we are seeing increased interest from independent schools. In June some 35 schools were entering at least one for Cambridge International AS and A level – a small base but significantly larger than last year. Overall UK entries were up 42%.

These schools tell us that, like Cambridge IGCSE, they are choosing Cambridge International AS and A levels on the strength of the syllabuses. Each syllabus is developed in conjunction with higher education to make sure that it covers the content that will equip the student with the right knowledge to make a successful transition to undergraduate level study.

While a robust base of academic content is an essential part of any post-16 qualification, Cambridge International AS and A levels also develop skills such as independent learning, research, communication and collaboration. The examinations will, of course, test students' knowledge and require them to apply that knowledge to solve problems or develop their own

conclusions. But the emphasis on developing and applying skills through the course is vital for students' transition from a 16 year-old, IGCSE-level learner to one ready to make the most of their learning at university.

On the subject of higher education, all UK universities accept Cambridge International AS and A level, as do over 450 US universities. Thousands of students apply and are accepted at leading universities worldwide with the qualification, including in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Singapore, Egypt, Jordan, South Africa, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain. We also have an international recognitions team who work with universities worldwide to ensure that they understand the achievement represented by Cambridge qualifications, and recognition is always growing.

What do we think is next for Cambridge International AS and A level in the UK? As we sit outside the UK system, our qualifications have autonomy and stability. Like the Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International AS and A level syllabuses are revised on a five-year timeline which allows schools greater control in planning their curricula.

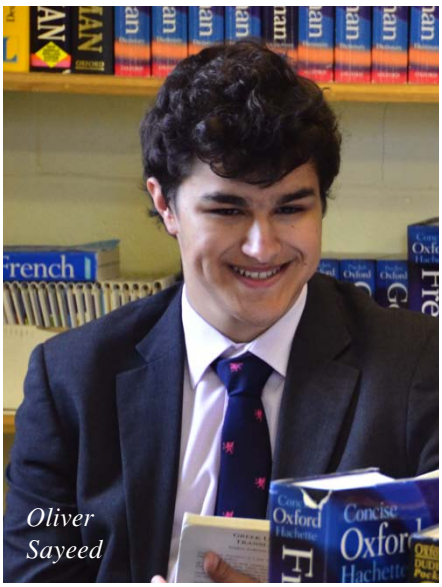
The retention of AS level as part of a final A level is also significant. Many UK schools have told us that, given the choice, they would like to keep the staged assessment option. If they wish to continue using AS level as 'half an A level', giving students the choice to progress their AS subjects to A level, then the international version might be an attractive option.

Schools opting for Cambridge International AS and A level are in excellent global company. The heritage and breadth of the qualification means that there is robust support for schools, including past papers, examiner feedback, training and printed resources.

All UK schools are being required to take a great many decisions over the coming years, and the relative freedom of independent schools means that they will be making more decisions still. By adopting international examinations, schools can be confident that they are offering qualifications that already have a strong global standing.

Peter Monteath is CIE's regional director, UK and Ireland.

Confident in the future.


Oliver Sayeed

Agglutinative morphology and other tricks of the Turkish tongue

Oliver Sayeed makes the case for a linguistics A level

"Ah! So, how many languages do you speak?" So goes the most common response to the information that I'm going to do a degree in something called linguistics. The question is understandable: most people's experience of *studying* language, as opposed to speaking it without any second thought, comes from school subjects such as French or Latin, where the objective is just to learn the language to be able to speak and read fluently. My truthful answer to this is "one!" The only language in which I have any interest in conversational proficiency is my native one, English.

I have knowledge of Latin, Greek, German and a few others, but my interest in this doesn't take the form of learning yet more words like *sesquilibra* or *verworfen*, nor reading any literature in these languages. These are the only language-related activities currently available at school, and they lead to a misconception about what linguistics is – something quite different.

Linguistics doesn't necessarily involve learning any languages at all, but it involves learning *about* them. For example, I have never attempted to learn a word of Turkish. I have no idea how to discuss the weather, or politics, nor can I name any irregular verbs (or say what a Turkish verb even looks like). I do however have some knowledge about Turkish that a linguist – in the sense of someone trained in linguistics, not just a language learner – might be more interested in.

In English, we are used to sentences of the form *I want a book*, where the words strictly fall in the order subject-verb-object. In Turkish, this sentence would be *Ben kitap istiyorum*, literally *I the book want*. In other words, Turkish has a preferred word order of subject-object-verb, as do Latin and Japanese. We describe English as SVO, and Turkish as SOV; modern Irish is VSO, and Xavante (or Yoda from *Star Wars*) is OSV.

So far all we have done is list facts. Is there anything to this grouping of languages? It turns out, curiously, that languages with SOV word order share other common properties – they are more likely to use auxiliary verbs after main verbs, and possessed nouns after their genitive noun phrases. SVO languages do the opposite.

Strong statistical tendencies are called linguistic universals, and they pose a puzzle for linguists as to how they have come to exist – what do these tell us about the capacity for language that our brains have evolved, and how it is structured? (An English exception to the SVO order is in set examples such as *scarcely had she done this*; this turns out to be a fossilized usage from an earlier stage of the language, and to explain this, we need the discipline of historical linguistics!)

This fact about Turkish is a syntactic one, *ie* concerning the way that sentences are structured. There are more ways to describe Turkish linguistically, on different levels, and how it differs from English. The two languages also differ in how they join words (or more properly *morphemes*, units of meaning) together to form new ones.

Turkish is described as having an agglutinative morphology, meaning that its grammar creates words by compounding together lots of small parts to a stem. Famously in extreme cases, this results in long words such as *bayramla-amadıklarımız* (those of our number with whom we cannot exchange the season's greetings)! English and Chinese are described, conversely, as analytic languages, meaning that they convey grammatical relationships using separate words.

On the level of sounds, too, there are linguistic statements to be made. Unlike English, Turkish has a phonological restriction on what sounds can appear together in a word, known as vowel harmony – every word must contain only vowels pronounced at the back of the mouth (*a*, *ı*, *o*, and *u*), or at the front (*e*, *i*, *ö*, and *ü*), so that *gündür* and *paltodur* are possible words, but * *gündur* and * *paltodür* are not (denoted by an asterisk before the word). Turkish also contains sounds which English doesn't, such as the vowel [ɯ], denoted by the dotless letter *ı*. The study of the sounds that languages use in their vocabulary is called phonology, and is quite far from anything considered in a school modern languages lesson.

For classicists and modern linguists, these examples may be quite a new way of looking at language. Of my school year group of 150, none other than me knew very much about linguistics (as opposed to knowing languages), and few friends and family have much acquaintance with the subject.

A simple definition of linguistics is 'the science of language' – the study of a complicated natural phenomenon and the rules that govern it; its origin in the brain; and its discernible history. As we have seen, these rules can apply at different levels, to different aspects of speech: syntax describes the structure of sentences, morphology the makeup of words, and phonology the rules concerning sounds.

One token of evidence that there are young people like myself interested in linguistics is the popularity of the International Linguistics Olympiad, from which I have recently returned in Beijing, having also competed last year in Manchester. As one of 12 International Science Olympiads, the individual competition involves a series of five challenging puzzles in completely unknown languages – which the contestants understand no more than I do Turkish – where the objective is to explain the patterns, rules, and principles underlying some data, similar to the rules governing vowel harmony we have seen.

This year's paper included deducing the phonological rules behind noun pluralization in Kiowa, the principles of verbal morphology in Benabena, and patterns in accentuation in Engenni. We'd heard of none of these languages, but no matter! Linguistics is about pattern-spotting, rather than language-learning.

The IOL (interestingly, the acronym is designed to be internationally neutral, by not corresponding to the word order in any language) is a social and cultural experience as well as an academic one. Far from being all linguists, my fellow contestants were everything from mathematicians to philosophers. Indeed, the statistics from successful UK participants show that almost all of them also have high mathematical ability, suggesting that similar logical, symbol-manipulating skills are required for both subjects. Conversations ranged from multidimensional chess variants to communist politics.

Beijing in particular was a fascinating city to visit. I had never been to Asia before, so the short trips out to the Great Wall, a teahouse, a palace and a traditional opera were all experiences worth having, as was the chance to talk to Chinese students about newspapers and voting, and see the effects of a government very at odds with anything in the West.

Despite this interest in the field, there currently exists no A level in linguistics: it remains the only International Science Olympiad with no examinable equivalent at secondary school level. My personal experience of this was that I was pushed into studying otherwise (relatively) undesirable A levels, since Latin and Greek are mostly concerned with reading and analysing classical literature, and German and other modern language A levels largely entail learning about foreign culture and discussing social issues.

English language comes closer in its emphasis on language itself, but describes no languages other than English, and with a relatively low level of technical detail, with a focus on comparing particular texts rather than considering language in general as an area of study. Questions about phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, pragmatics, child language acquisition, the psychology of second-language learning, the history of languages, and the biological apparatus underlying the whole edifice, are left unmentioned in any A levels today, and yet many other young people I've talked to find these topics interesting – once they realise a linguistic way of thinking exists.

Popular authors such as Steven Pinker and David Crystal have sold successful books for a lay audience introducing some of these concepts informally, and linguistics is a thriving academic discipline with manifold areas of research overlapping with psychology, cognitive science, biology, mathematics, computer science, philosophy, physics, history and literature. The branch of knowledge has the capacity to enthral and I am testament to this!

The evidence points to linguistics appealing to both genders alike, with females being in the majority, uniquely for a science. The UK Linguistics Olympiad has had almost 2000 entrants in recent years. Given the strong research base of linguistics, and the wealth and variety of knowledge available, one wonders how much more popular the subject might be if an outlet existed in schools.

My own interest in linguistics has survived outside of school, from popular literature, introductory textbooks, public talks at universities and, most often, Wikipedia pages (consistently as well-written and informative as books), but also off-syllabus tidbits from interesting teachers.

I suspect there are others like me who share a love of the subject, but a frustration that our current A levels don't cater for it; or indeed some who have no idea that linguistics exists, for whom linguistics would be an ideal subject, but are set on paths in modern languages or classics as their closest alternative. For people who have ever asked where languages come from, or why they change, or how they are connected, or shown any deeper curiosity for why language is the way it is, linguistics might just be the perfect choice.

Oliver Sayeed is a former pupil of Abingdon School and is now reading linguistics at Cambridge.

Abingdon School

Dr Cathy Taylor

An imagined Englishness

In the first of two articles, Cathy Taylor traces the rise and development of the boarding school genre of fiction from its origins to the present day

There has always been public demand for boarding school fiction. The British boarding school genre has survived the twists and turns of sociological and economic change, maintaining popularity with readers over centuries.

The first example of boarding school fiction emerged in the mid 18th century with the publication in 1749 of Sarah Fielding's novel *The Governess or The Little Female Academy*. It is narrated through the voice of Mrs Teachum, who, as a consequence of the death of her husband and her children in quick succession, decides to establish a school with the specific intention of 'educating children'.

Fielding's early, fictional representation of life in an English boarding institution is generally acknowledged to be the prototype of what has now become accepted as *the boarding school novel*. Written by a woman during a period of history when girls were traditionally taught at home, the novel (with its interesting diminutive modifier *Little* in the title) reinforces the gender stereotype and cultural expectations of women at that time.

Fielding's account of institutionalised learning pushed the boundaries of fiction in two ways. First, she constructed an instructional account of female education in a patriarchal world and, secondly, she opened up the landscape of the 18th century boarding school environment to a wider social class, many of whom would never experience the world of dormitories, public school ritual and historical tradition.

Sarah Fielding's instructional novel epitomizes the fundamental Lockean principle of learning for its own sake. Learning should not be a burden but a challenging quest for enlightenment and enjoyment. Dickens, by contrast, explored the damage that can be done to young minds where there is an absence of enjoyment, happiness or enlightenment.

Both Mrs Teachum's name and her circumstances prefigure Dickens and his gloomy view of boarding school life. The Victorian novel makes no apology for its representation of boarding school education as a landscape of fear and cruelty. In *Hard Times (1854)* Gradgrind literally grinds his hapless pupils into learning, dismissing the riches of the imagination of Coleridge's Romantic philosophy and substituting Rousseau's ideology of an education fostered by the natural world with hard 'Facts'.

Dickens' school is literally and metaphorically dark and set in the urbanised location of Coketown. It is Dickens' uncompromising critique of English education in *Nicholas Nickleby (1838-9),* however, that is best remembered, excoriating the 'Yorkshire Schools' with the brutal scenes it depicts in the boarding school run by Wackford Squeers. Both Dotheboy's Hall and Lowood School in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre (1847)* are boarding schools for orphans, destitute and unwanted children.

Bronte's description of freezing dormitories, disease and loneliness, together with Squeer's propensity to beat his pupils and Brocklehurst's humiliation of the young Jane, are not only autobiographical, but social commentaries on the appalling conditions of educational boarding establishments in the 19th century. Dickens was relentless in his exposure of these schools, obsessively driving his message home in *David Copperfield (1850)* and *Dombey and Son (1846-8).*

Thankfully, by 1857, the representation of the English boarding school turns a corner. Thomas Hughes' novel *Tom Brown's School Days* becomes a template for a more humane representation of the public school experience. While Kenneth Allsop dismissed Hughes' representation of a boys' public school as 'a brochure of the popularised, romantic, catchpenny Dream School' and 'a coupon for instant tradition'[1], the continued popularity of the novel today proves that Hughes had created a relevant story.

Allsop was writing during a period where it was all too easy to mock what was considered an obsolete educational idea. It would take a further 40 years, however, to resurrect the positive and enduring reception of the boarding school genre.

Andrew Saunders' excellent Introduction to The Oxford World Classic's edition of *Tom Brown's School Days* examines Dr Arnold's moral and religious values, which endure in the best of our boarding schools today. Echoes of this ideology could be heard in the Warden of Radley's words to his students in *A Very English Education,* the BBC documentary about the College broadcast in 2013.

The values instilled at Rugby by Dr Arnold ensured that the late Victorian reader was reassured that respectability and the public school boarding school tradition walked hand in hand. An education based on moral principles and excellent academic standards was to be aspired to and sought after. Hughes' representation of school is a microcosm of England as a whole, 'justice and social order were paramount'.[2]

Professor Saunders describes the Arnoldian educational framework in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* as a type of 'Educational Desiderata' where there are three primary ideologies that drive the ethos of the boarding school; religious and moral principle, gentlemanly conduct and intellectual ability.

According to Dr Arnold, school experience necessarily informs every aspect of one's life. Hughes believed that the value of the principles of the well-run, ordered school should be extended to society as a whole. The young master in the

novel who envisages Rugby 'as the only little corner of the British Empire which is thoroughly, wisely and strongly ruled'[3] is a model Hughes clearly hoped would be replicated widely. Tom's experience at the hands of the notorious Flashman reflects the continuum of the boarding school's genre engagement with ideas of the battle of good and evil, interestingly sustained in Harry Potter.

Talbot Baines Reed, in his series of novels *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* (1887), inspired by Hughes' representation of the English public school, moves the instructional school story forward to an interest in plot and the attitudes and feelings of the pupils themselves.

From the beginning of the 20th century, four prolific writers explored the iconic themes and qualities associated with the boarding school experience: honour, quests and self-discovery. P G Wodehouse (fl. 1902 to 1975), Charles Hamilton (fl. 1907 to 1961) Geoffrey Trease (fl. 1934 to 1997) and Anthony Buckeridge (fl. 1948 to 2004) created a whole world of reassuring schoolboy fiction.

While boarding school for boys was an education for the world, it took longer for girls' boarding school stories to break the mould of envisaging education as preparation for the drawing room, with all its emphasis on social skills rather than intellectual ability.

At the start of the 20th century fewer than a quarter of British girls between 12 and 18 were educated, but by 1920 numbers had risen from 20,000 to 185,000. The 1920s consequently saw a rise in girls' boarding school fiction. This specific form of the genre revealed school experience without boys. Fiction was capable of providing a common imaginary world with shared stories, feelings and interests.

> The turn of the century saw girl's dramatic liberation when she first dressed in a costume distinctly her own, which marked her as neither child nor woman, had pockets, made it possible to run and climb, and let her add a boy style shirt and tie.[4]

Ju Gosling in *The History of Girls' School Stories*, describes the work of Angela Brazil, (*The Fortunes of Phillipa, etc*, fl. 1904 to 1946) and Elinor M Brent Dyer, (*The Chalet School series etc*, fl. 1922 to 1969) as providing a means for character improvement fused with a psychological and emotional perspective. The post 1900 school stories created a 'community where the important rules more than anything else are the children's own ethics and mores'.

The new girls' popular fiction emphasises peer standards not adult standards ... 'school stories value cohesion, formation of a group loyalty and care of girls for one another'.[5] In Brazil's world, language choices and narrative voice reflected a new anti-authoritarian code which brought female characterisation nearer their male counterparts.

Nowhere is this idea that middle class girls' stories were being taken seriously at last more clearly expressed than in Enid Blyton's representation of school life through mixed gendered stories in her *The Famous Five* series (fl. 1922 to 1964). Here, children are seen to be separated from parents but growing up together, without necessarily being haunted by tragedy of the kind we see in Fielding's 18th century novel.

To come full circle, Charlotte Mendelson's novel *Almost English* (2013) has its roots firmly in the idea of the English boarding school as a representation of history and tradition.

'Bronte's description of freezing dormitories, disease and loneliness, together with Squeer's propensity to beat his pupils and Brocklehurst's humiliation of the young Jane, are not only autobiographical, but social commentaries on the appalling conditions of educational boarding establishments in the 19th century. Dickens was relentless in his exposure of these schools…'

Set in 1988, the novel's 16 year-old heroine Marina, to an extent an outsider, aspires to become a part of the world of a girls' public school at Combe Abbey in Dorset which she and her family believe will open the right doors for her.

Marina is exiled not only from her mother country but also from the close, quirky immediate family in their adopted second London home. When she moves to her new school she is part of a process of reinvention: passing through a rite of passage constructed by ritual, tradition and a rich, historical past.

Just as David Powlett-Jones in R F Delderfield's *To Serve Them All My Days (1974)*, becomes a metaphorical bridge or passage over a generation gap as a result of his experience of the Great War, so too does the experience at Combe Abbey allow Marina to close the gap of multiculturalism. Marina learns to discover who she really is and the importance of her cultural roots.

Possibly the richest of all the experiences gained at boarding school is one that Hughes predicted would enrich the future if embraced by all – the knowledge of self and the ability to gain this knowledge through global, multi-cultural interaction.

Footnotes

1. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and the Reinvention of The Past'. Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends. The Open University: Palgrave, MacMillan. 2009, p.p. 303-310.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*

Cathy Taylor recently retired from the staff of Ashville College. She taught English language and English literature and is a Cambridge graduate with a DPhil from York. She has an abiding interest in the links between landscape and art and is currently writing a book on Brittany and the colony of Impressionist artists who were regular visitors there.

In the next issue of *Conference & Common Room*, Dr Taylor will focus on the 'Harry Potter' effect.

Jonathan Whybrow

Time for a joint conference or a bridge too far?

Jonathan Whybrow asks why associations follow the rule 'no conferring'

I enjoy returning to school. The first few days of lists, management structures, policies and departmental meetings and potential sports teams remind me of what easy places schools are to administer – until the human element in the form of children and their parents arrive with what appears to be the sole purpose of disrupting all the best laid plans.

But the greatest emotion is one of renewing acquaintances with colleagues, with children and with parents. Shared holiday experiences, hopes for the coming academic year and observations of the world at large quickly fill every waking moment and soon the rhythm and routine of the school day, week, term takes over and we're off.

I also really look forward to the IAPS Conference. Not only do you pick up some useful initiatives, either from the speakers or listening carefully to colleagues, but also, with a little effort, one can have a very enjoyable couple of days with some entertaining and amusing people.

Worries for the coming year can seem a little less daunting when shared with others who can empathise. But something is missing. And in my opinion that something is the participation of the Heads of schools in HMC, SHMIS and GSA, and, dare I say it, the bursars of ISBA.

We are in it together. Independent education is under pressure, under scrutiny and, for most, over expensive. And yet, we continue to organize separate conferences, missing a real opportunity to present a united front to the government, the press and the market place. So far, the only reason that has been offered to me as to why we avoid organising one conference is that there isn't a venue large enough to accommodate us all.

A quick glance at the website for Celtic Manor shows that it can manage a conference for 1500 – a decent start. And if one single venue cannot cope with all of us, surely we can discover four hotels and one conference centre in close vicinity? This actually might be the better solution as it would offer the potential for flexibility, which would serve not only the whole, but also the separate associations.

If I remember correctly, this actually happened a few years ago when HMC, having been gazumped by the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool, found itself billeted in a hotel in central London adjacent to the one being occupied by IAPS.

No one got hurt, rival gangs of Heads did not come to blows in the hotel bar or on the train bringing them to the venue, and I actually spent a very useful two hours at tea with HMC heads, conducting more productive business there than in a term's worth of "hang on, I'll just see if I can find him/her" phone calls.

The potential for spending time valuably is huge. The potential to attract speakers with real 'clout' increases if they know that they are going to be speaking to the whole independent sector. Those who sponsor events will view the event as better value for money. The possibilities for debate between individuals from different sectors on a range of subjects, old and new, are limitless. Time spent talking about transition issues, whether they are concerned with whole sector matters or individual cases, can involve the relevant parties there and then.

So who organizes this and when does it take place? I do not advocate that a joint conference replaces those arranged by the individual associations completely. Instead, I would suggest that a joint conference takes place every third or fourth year in the conference season – late September/early October.

Unless there was a dramatic turnover of personnel, this should allow for genuine relationships to develop. Those responsible for producing the annual conference for their association would join together for the purpose of designing and delivering the all-party event. With a three or four year lead-time and with greater financial leverage, high-profile speakers can be booked in advance.

One would hope that sponsors would be attracted to the greater marketing and networking opportunities and I know that parents would be more convinced that my time away was well spent if they knew that I was liaising with senior schools for the benefit of their children.

To my colleagues in the independent sector, I wish you every success in the New Year. I just wish that I could say it to you in person more often.

Jonathan Whybrow moved from being Headmaster of Beachborough to become Headmaster of Cheltenham College Preparatory School in 2013.

HERE & THERE

Remembering Bugler Boy Timmins

On Tuesday 11 November, a group of pupils from the Royal Hospital School travelled to the original site of their School in Greenwich. They took with them six oak boards naming 151 former pupils who attended the School between 1889 and 1918 and lost their lives during WW1.

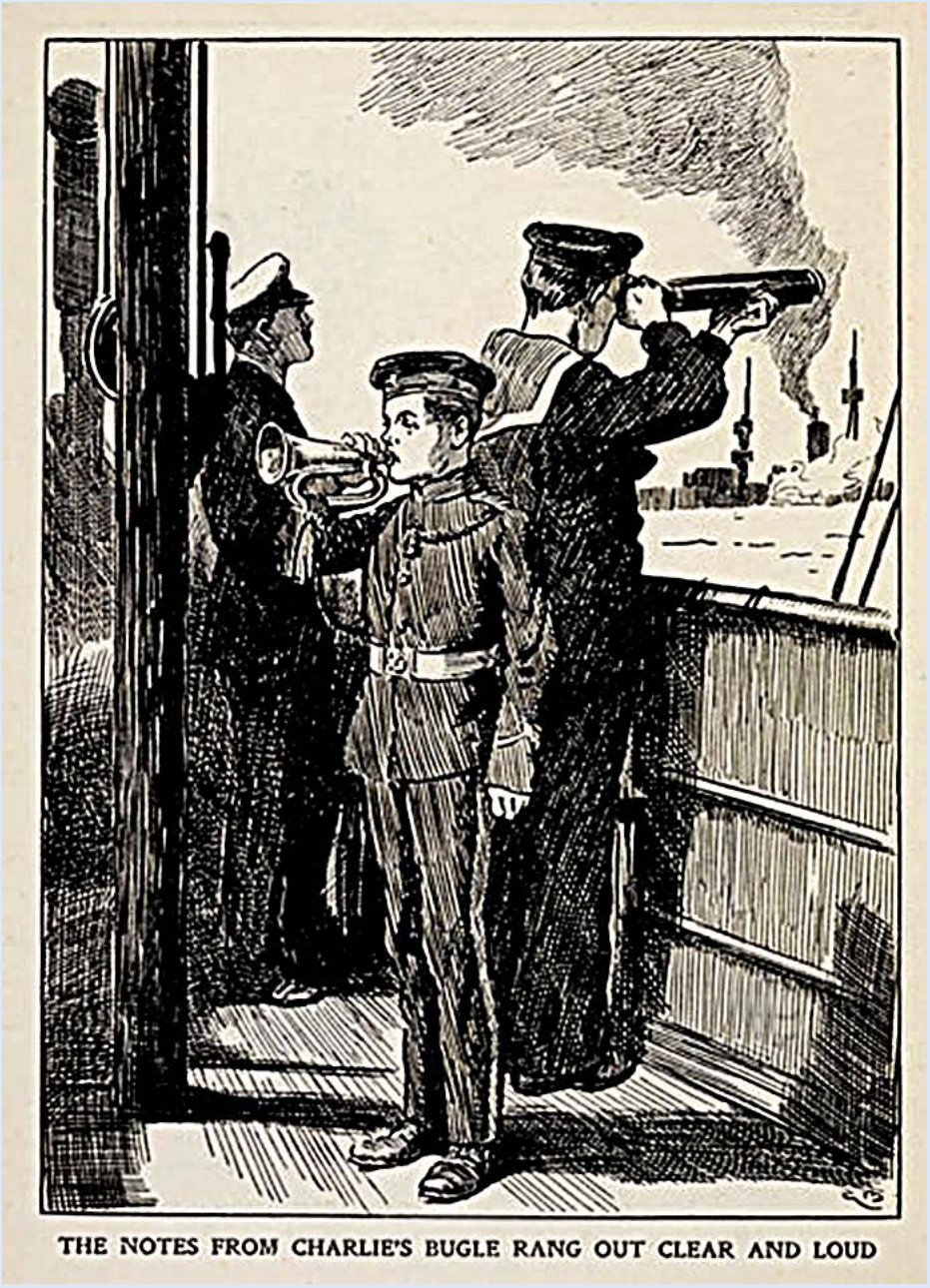
The School party, dressed in their ceremonial naval uniforms, paraded the boards to the Queens House where a wreath was laid, followed by the Last Post and a two minutes silence.

The boards make up a former War Memorial measuring 13ft by 6ft, which originally hung in the Great Hall of the Queen's House, Greenwich with the inscription 'In Proud Memory of Those Old Boys who fell during the Great War, 1914-1918, Lest we Forget'.

They were brought to Suffolk in 1933 when the School relocated and were reused as honours boards with the original names being hidden. They were rediscovered in a disused garage at the School in December 2013 and, when the veneer was removed, the ghosted outlines of the names of the fallen were revealed.

Amongst the names on the boards, the youngest boy listed was Charles Ernest Timmins, a 14 year-old from Kent who was the bugler aboard HMS *Cardiff*. Timmins lost his life in 1917 whilst alerting his ship's company during the battle at Heligoland, killed when a piece of shrapnel from a shell blew a hole in his ship's funnel and pierced his bugle.

This bugle has been located on the Type-45 Destroyer HMS *Dragon* and, in acknowledgement of this important historical link, the Royal Navy sounded the Last Post on board HMS *Dragon* at sea as RHS pupils played at the Queen's House in Greenwich and at the School in Suffolk.



Bugler Boy Timmins RM, 1919.

The War Memorial in situ at the Queens House, 1919.

Promethean women in the Great War

Part two: Christopher Martin describes some of the experiences of women serving in Flanders

Very few women actually fought in this war. Such a radical move was still beyond the imagination of the general staff. Flora Sandes was one. She joined the Serbian army and rose to the rank of Captain. Then there was the notorious Russian 'Battalion of Death' for which 2000 women volunteered, of whom 300 saw active service and suffered heavy casualties.

Perhaps the most intriguing British woman combatant was Dorothy Lawrence. She had wanted to be a war correspondent but failed to get the necessary sponsorship from any newspaper. Undeterred, and having spotted that even war correspondents had no access to the Front, she decided to do things her way.

Armed with a magical mixture of chutzpah, determination, enterprise and an indomitable sense of humour, and with the aid of half a dozen Tommies who assisted her along the way, she managed to outwit the British Army sufficiently to make it to the 'front of the Front'. The Front, as she soon realised, was the generic term for an area, possibly several miles deep, behind the actual trenches.

Two young privates, who befriended her, provided a 'borrowed' uniform and boots. A Scots Military Policeman entered into the spirit of the enterprise and cut her waist-long hair to regulation length. Then, with 2/6d in her pocket, she set off to cycle the 60 kilometres from Amiens to Béthune, ending up at Albert where she embarked on her three month career as a soldier in the British Army.

Disguised as a Royal Engineer, for some six weeks she undertook tunnelling duties at night, descending into the bowels of the earth to lay mines under German trenches. This was just before the battle of Loos, when

> each man held his life in his hand... How do you lay a mine? Usually they are only 100 feet deep. Two men descend a ladder together. One prepares the fuse, while his (in this case her) mate lays the mine... (Meanwhile) Fritz bores in from the opposite trench. The entire art of mining rests on anticipating him. Tap ... tap ... tap. No miner fails to take these sounds as a warning. So often these taps disturbed the quiet nights at the front that brought a solemn splendour all of their own.[1]

When eventually her identity was revealed, she was arrested and brought before a panel of officers, who had no idea how to deal with this unprecedented situation. There was apparently nothing in King's Regulations to assist them.

> Coming into the Colonel's presence, I burst out laughing. There was I, a be-trousered female, deposited among 20 embarrassed officers – all wearing kilts.[1]

There were suspicions that she was a spy. The thought began to pervade the military mind that perhaps Mata Hari and she were in league, though, as she points out herself, she wished to appear conspicuously unattractive, the opposite of Miss Hari's quintessence of seduction.

> The High Command surely lack imagination or this trivial escapade could not have assumed such proportions. I eventually occupied the undivided attention of six Generals and 20 staff officers.[1]

She was eventually repatriated via a Convent in St Omer, moving at one bound from an entirely male to an entirely female environment. Throughout, she has nothing but praise for the

> simple soldiers, French and British, who showed me chivalry... I passed through the lines dressed as a girl, lived amidst the French army and lived in an English camp as a man, was two weeks under fire as a soldier – and have no regrets.[3]

Right from the outset, of course, there had been many who fundamentally disapproved of the war. Pacifism was embraced by both men and women equally, and all stoically adhered to their principles, even in the face of widespread national disgust. White feathers were liberally bestowed on men thought to be 'Conchies', including soldiers back from the front in civilian clothes, but, from 1916 onwards, opinion hardened against women pacifists who endured often violent obloquy.

Indeed, Woodrow Wilson himself, not a man given to extreme populism, declared them 'disloyal citizens'. Gertrude Stein acted as a driver for the American Fund, ferrying French wounded back from the Front. Her experiences and those of the mangled men she helped to save marked her deeply. She was bitterly disillusioned by the war and declared herself a member of what she termed the 'Lost Generation'.[4]

Other notable women, equally appalled at what they saw, brought their particular skills to the Front. Marie Curie, for example, visited over 300 field hospitals, demonstrating to surgeons how her X-Ray machine could help to locate shrapnel and bullets lodged in wounded soldiers. They were nursed by ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances.

Young nurses new to their uniforms found themselves pitch-forked into what must have seemed like a butcher's shop, caring physically and emotionally for shattered and traumatised young men, their contemporaries. People had to grow up very fast at that time. We probably all have a mental picture of strong young women in pristine white aprons laying cool hands on fevered brows in long hospital wards, but sometimes the small details recalled by one of their number still catch one unawares. A member of the VAD, the Voluntary Aid Detachment, described her work as trying to add normality to those for whom normality was a very distant memory:

> I worked in a hospital for shell shocked soldiers. Very often they just could not keep their head or their hands

still, so I used to write love letters for them. I used to put, 'My dearest darling' and I'd end, 'Forever yours'.

Nurse Eleanora Pemberton, coming home on leave from her field hospital, recalls a unique encounter at Boulogne:

> I watched Lord Roberts' little coffin brought down to be put on the ship to England. He'd died aged 82 up at the Front. It was only a little coffin – a very small one because he was very short of course. He was carried by four Tommies straight from the Front, all covered in mud.[2]

And amongst these nurses was the woman who must surely head the list of heroines, Edith Cavell, who served in Belgium, and who assisted some 200 British soldiers to evade the German troops in the area, for which she was summarily executed. Her last words, one might argue, should be tattooed on the wrists of all politicians who contemplate waging war. "I realise patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone."[4]

It was perhaps inevitable that the unique circumstances generated by this desperate war should have produced among so many millions of women a sense of freedom and self-worth that would prove largely illusory afterwards. Despite the many hardships and the unremitting labour, young women had thrived on the ozone of fulfilling a national service in the company of so many others of their generation. They had proved themselves capable of acquiring a wide range of skills denied them earlier in the male-dominated society in which they had grown up, and which appeared to have been terminally undermined in the Flanders trenches.

But it hadn't. The return of the survivors in 1918 signalled a social upheaval for women almost as volcanic as that which had occurred four years earlier at the outbreak of war. Both young and older men had been sustained to a greater or lesser extent through the trauma of trench warfare by memories of hearth and home, peopled by adoring wives, girlfriends and sisters – the 'weaker' if 'fairer' sex.

The changes that confronted them on their return were unwelcome. The women they encountered were more socially aware, less deferential, had more money in their pockets, were more free-spirited and were more resistant to exploitation than their men folk either remembered or, in many cases, wanted. Worst of all, they'd taken their jobs.

It was not long before women started to be replaced by men in the bulk of the jobs they'd done so competently for several years. The *status quo ante* was being revived. Trades unions started to haemorrhage women members from a high of well over eight million in 1919. In 1918, only women over 30 who met certain property qualifications had the right to vote, so the majority could only register for the first time in 1924 their dismay at the way in which their lives had been turned upside down again.

It is easy to understand why demobilisation was much more popular with men than with women. Young Winston Churchill was the Minister for the Munitions Department at the time. 'The War Office is blamed, like Pharaoh, because he wouldn't let his people go, but *we* cannot let the people stay.'[1]

Mary Macarthur, a veteran trades union organiser, summarised the bleak mood among women who had effectively been declared redundant: 'The new world looks like the old one, rolling along as stupidly and blindly as ever.' Amid the general gloom, one breezy comment submitted as evidence to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry – the snappily abbreviated WCCWI – does lighten the tone in what was otherwise a dry discussion on the impact of young women on the work place, and their relationship with the volunteer ladies charged with their welfare: 'Volunteer workers are such busy bodies. They sum up girls as either nice girls or rude girls. The nice girls get all their attention and the rude girls get nothing. This makes some girls who are not rude, rude.'[1]

Anyone working with girls in school today will know exactly how that works.

Sources

1. Dorothy Lawrence. 'Sapper Dorothy; the only woman soldier in the Royal Engineers, 51st Division, 79th Tunnelling Company.'
2. Ann Kramer. 'Women and War.'
3. Dorothy Lawrence. 'Sapper Dorothy; the only woman soldier in the Royal Engineers, 51st Division, 79th Tunnelling Company.'
4. Ann Kramer. 'Women and War.'

Christopher Martin served with the 10th Royal Gurkha Rifles in the Malaya Emergency Campaign during National Service from 1957 to 1959.

Their name liveth for evermore

Sarah Wearne considers memorials of the Great War in British public schools

How did a nation not known for its ability to express emotion, in fact famous for its 'stiff upper lip', manage to express its grief, love, pride and perhaps even guilt, for the thousands of young men who died in its service during the Great War? And how in particular did the public schools do this, since it was their former pupils who, as junior officers, held the British Army's most dangerous ranks?

Recording the names of the dead seems to have been the top priority. Schools transcribed them onto wood, stone, marble, brass, bronze, paper and parchment, the names listed alphabetically without reference to social or military rank (Eastbourne), in rank order by regiment (Glenalmond), or chronologically by year of death (Clifton).

The Fettes Memorial.

Rolls of Service listed all those who served, highlighting the names of the dead in red (Eton), or in bold (Abingdon). They collected photographs of the dead, which they published together with brief biographies (Rugby), framed and hung on the wall (Bradfield), or kept in a box (Abingdon) until they were published online in July 2014. (Abingdon's German exchange partner school, the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld, retains a collection of essays written by pupils there in 1914 which offers a fascinating insight into their thinking, belying the popular opinion of Germany's attitude at that time.)

Thomas Arnold's mid-19th century reforms at Rugby established Christianity at the heart of school life, hence the many chapels and chapel extensions, cloisters, memorial altars, stained glass windows, lecterns, screens and pieces of communion plate that became war memorials.

Central to them all was the cross, the emblem of Christ's sacrifice and, by association, the sacrifice of these young men: a Calvary cross at Stonyhurst, a wayside cross at St Edward's, Oxford, a Celtic cross at the Dragon School and, at Haileybury, a Cross of Sacrifice, designed by an old Haileyburian, Sir Reginald Blomfield, for use in the War Grave Commission's cemeteries.

Christ was not the only exemplar. St George, England's patron saint, depicted with a dragon (Wellington College), epitomized the patriotic triumph of good over evil. At The Leys, where he is without a dragon, St George is a Christian soldier, emphasized by the inscription quoting Bunyan's Mr Valiant-for-Truth, 'My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder.'

Another quotation from *Pilgrim's Progress* is the centre point of the Eastbourne memorial. At Malvern the designer intended a dragonless St George to represent 'the best qualities in the character of English manhood and those most worth striving for'. Shrewsbury's paradigm was their old boy, the 16th-century poet, courtier and soldier, Sir Philip Sidney, who as he lay dying gave his water to another soldier with the words, "Thy necessity is greater than mine."

For Cheltenham College, it was Sir Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten' because his heart was pure. Fettes chose a modern-day hero, a junior officer who, fatally injured, gestures from the ground for his men to 'Carry on'.

Junior officers played a vital part in the war and the public schools that 'had bred them up to manhood' claimed some of the praise. As General Sir Francis Davies said at the unveiling of Worcester Grammar School's memorial, "Schools of this kind are a particularly British institution. Nothing like them exists except under the British flag. Boys learn to play the game, to obey and to command."

'To play the game,' of course echoes Cliftonian Sir Henry Newbolt's *Vitai Lampida*, published in 1892. These were the schools where boys learnt that 'it was not the players that mattered but the game; it was not the crew but the ship', (General Lord Hume at the unveiling of the Mill Hill memorial.)

Continued overleaf →

Eastbourne College's Memorial.

Eton's Roll of Service.

1912 Lee-Steere, J. H. G., Lt. Grenadier Gds. France (k. 17.11.14) E.L.C.
1908 Leech, J. C., Capt. 8th Hussars, att. R.A.F., p. France E.L.V.
1880 Leeds, Duke of (Marquess of Carmarthen at Eton), Cr. R.N.V.R. Home Waters, Mediterranean G.E.M.
1901 Leeke, R. H., Maj. Rifle Bde., att. King's African Rifles. E. Africa (d. 5.11.15) E.C.A.L.
1910 Lees, B. P. T., M.C., Capt. Dorset Yeomanry, w. Egypt, Palestine R.W.W.-T., C.M.W.
1896 Lees, E. B., Maj. Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry, att. Sherwood Foresters. France (k. 31.7.18) H.B.
1908 Lees, J., 2nd Lt. H.L.I., att. Lt. Nigerian Regt. (drowned 28.3.15) T.C.P., E.L.C.
1914 Lees, J. M., Lt. N. Staffordshire Regt. France (k. 22.8.16) M.D.H.
1906 Lees, Sir J. V. E., Bart., D.S.O., M.C. (F) Maj. K.R.R.C., att. Australian Imp. Forces, Staff, w. 2., m. France R.W.W.-T., C.M.W.
1883 Lees, R. L., D.S.O., O.B.E., V.D., Lt.-Col. Lancashire Fusiliers, att. Manchester Regt. and Suffolk Regt., m. 3. France, Egypt, Gallipoli A.C.
1905 Lees, Sir T. E. K., Bart., Lt. 15th Hussars, att. Dorset Yeomanry, and Staff. Gallipoli (d.w. 24.8.15) R.W.W.-T.
1914 Leese, O. W. H., D.S.O., Lt. Coldstream Gds., w. 3, m. 2. France P.V.B.
1897 Legard, A. D., C.B.E., Bt. Lt.-Col. K.R.R.C., and Staff. France S.A.D.
1895 Legard, D. A. H., Capt. R.A.F., late Lt. R.N.V.R. H.D.
1910 Legard, R. J., Lt. W. Yorkshire Regt. France (d.w. 9.5.15) R.P.L.B.
1913 Leggatt, L. C., 2nd Lt. Coldstream Gds., late Rifle Bde. France (k. 31.7.17) K.S.
1899 Legge, Hon. G., Capt. S. Staffordshire Regt. Gallipoli (k. 9.8.15) W.D.
1907 Legge-Bourke, N. W. H. (Legge at Eton), Lt. Coldstream Gds. France (k. 30.10.14) H.T.B.

152

1908 Legh, Hon P. W., O.B.E. (F) Capt. (t. Maj.) Grenadier Gds., and Staff, m. 2. France, Italy S.A.D., P.V.B.
1906 Legh, Hon. R. W. D., Capt. Lancashire Hussars, att. R.A., and Staff, m. France P.V.B.
1907 Leigh, C. Egerton, Lt. (t. Capt.) The Buffs, and Staff, w. 2. France E.C.A.L., J.M.D.
1910 Leigh, G. H., O.B.E., Capt. London Regt., empld. Maj. Worcestershire Regt. and Lt.-Col. S. Lancashire Regt., w. 2. France R.S.K.
1906 Leigh, J. C. Gerard, Capt. 1st Life Gds., w. France P.W.
1914 Leigh-Pemberton, R. D., M.C., Lt. Grenadier Gds. and Gds. M.G. Regt., att. R.A.F., w. France A.M.G.
1911 Leigh-Smith, P., Lt. Intell. Corps, m. France K.S.
1893 Leighton, B. E. P., Maj. 1st R. Dragoons, w. France E.C.A.L.
1909 Leighton, J. B. T., M.C., Maj. Scots Gds., att. R.F.C., m. 2. France, Egypt (d.w. 7.5.17) P.W.
1911 Leighton, Sir R. T., Bart., Capt. Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry, att. R.A.F., w., p. France M.D.H.
1893 Leith, A. R., O.B.E. (F) Maj. K.R.R.C., and Staff, w. 2. France P.H.C., A.C.B.
1895 Leitrim, Earl of, Maj. R. Inniskilling Fusiliers. France J.M.E.
1885 Lely, H. M., Lt. Labour Corps. France H.S.S.S., A.C.
1888 Le Marchant, E. T., C.B.E., Brig.-Gen. (R. Fusiliers), w. France F.H.R.
1892 Le Marchant, W. G., Lt. K.R.R.C., late Pte. R. Fusiliers. France P.W., H.B.
1896 Le Messurier, G. D. S., Maj. Wallajahbad L.I., I.A. India C.H.A.
1877 Lennard, Sir H. A. H. F., Bart. (F) Lt.-Col. Border Regt., att. Cheshire Regt., and Staff. France E.W.
1874 Lermitte, H. J., the late, Capt. Remount Service, late Lt.-Col. Essex Yeomanry. (d. 20.6.18) G.R.D.
1879 Le Roy Lewis, H., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., T.D. (F) Col. Hampshire Yeomanry, and Staff, m. 2. France F.W.C.
1913 Le Roy Lewis, S. H., Lt. 9th Lancers, empld. M.G. Cav. France E.I.

x

153

At Lancing, Prince Henry spoke specifically of the unselfishness boys learnt on the playing field, 'To play for your side and not yourself.' All this explains why a large number of schools, like Cranbrook, Merchant Taylor's and Hurstpierpoint, bought playing fields and built sports pavilions as war memorials, the connection made plain in the dedication on the pavilion at King's School, Worcester:

> This pavilion … was erected in memory of those who, having learnt in this place to play the game for their School, played it also for their country during the years 1914-1919.

At Denstone the son of the founder asked whether memorials were "not signs pointing with pride to the past," and "to the future with confidence?" So it was, with confidence in their future and pride in their achievements, that Berkhamsted built a library, Eastbourne science laboratories, Bishop's Stortford an assembly hall, Haileybury a dining room and Ardingly a new classroom wing.

It was this same confidence and belief that encouraged schools to establish funds for memorial scholarships and bursaries, probably the most universal of school memorials. At Eton, where it was the main focus of their memorial fundraising, there were 22 boys on memorial bursaries by 1920 and, as with most of these funds, that at Eton continues to this day.

Many of these memorials are recorded in C F Kernot's *British Public School War Memorials* (1927). However, the book is incomplete since many schools had not finalised their schemes by the time it went to print.

There is another problem, the photographs: Kernot's grainy, black and white images cannot do the memorials justice. Some of them are the work of the finest artists, craftsmen and architects of the day, some of the school art master and one, at Monmouth, of the father of one of the dead.

They all deserve to be better recorded, especially as several of them no longer exist. A German bomb destroyed Westminster's on the night of 12th May 1941; St George's Harpenden's was lost to age and the vagaries of fashion; the need for more space dictated the diminishment of Felsted's, and a fire destroyed the memorial at King's School, Ely.

It was for this reason that in 2013 the School Archivists' Group, which represents all the major independent schools in the UK, decided to mark the 100th anniversary of the war by producing a new record of these memorials, one that demonstrates in words and images how schools used the language of this country's cultural past, its religion, history, myths, legends, art, architecture and literature, to remember those who died in its service a century ago.

This article is based on the presentation Sarah Wearne gave to the School Archivists Group at Eastbourne College on 30th May 2013. As co-ordinator of the project, Sarah, who is the archivist at Abingdon School, can be contacted at sarah.wearne@abingdon.org.uk. The project is a work in progress, to be completed by November 2018, and schools are invited to join up so that the record may be as complete as possible.

HERE & THERE

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

Olivia is Arkwright Engineering scholar

The Nottingham Girls' High School celebrated the achievement of Olivia Dadge, who beat over 1000 other candidates to win a coveted Arkwright Engineering Scholarship. The renowned Scholarships provide students with a £600 financial award to enhance their A level studies and a range of activities to develop their understanding and experience of engineering. They are respected by leading universities and companies and are supported by top engineering employers and organisations.

Olivia had to complete a rigorous selection process consisting of a detailed application form, a two-hour aptitude exam and an interview hosted at a top engineering university. The aptitude exam tested candidates' flair and originality in solving engineering design problems. At the in-depth interview, candidates were asked about their career aspirations and had to discuss an engineering project they had conducted.

During the interview day, the candidates took part in a team exercise to solve a hands-on engineering problem working with students they had never met before. Candidates and their parents also toured the engineering facilities at the host university and explored the diversity of engineering and related design careers and their importance to the UK economy.

Anthony McLellan

Fencing the cliff

Anthony McLellan describes the path to the edge – and back

In the early 1980s, Anthony McLellan was director of the alcohol rehabilitation programmes for the Priory Hospital Group in London. When Dom Philip Jebb, Headmaster of Anthony's old school Downside, asked him to recommend someone to speak about alcohol to the pupils there, he found himself taking on the job. This led to the recognition that there was a growing need for a new dimension in pastoral care and opened the gateway to a whole new field of education.

As the goodwill generated by the alcohol presentations started to grow, there was an increasing demand for coverage of other topics. Over the years the McLellan Practice has added new speakers and today there is a team of over two dozen different speakers covering a comprehensive range of PSHE and sixth form topics that confront teenagers. There is something for parents and staff too. The cornerstone of everything at the Practice is the basic belief that 'what can be known should be known'. This is all about education and enlightenment, not entertainment.

Lifestyles have changed dramatically in the last 40 years. But human nature has not changed. Without good information, young people are liable to make life-threateningly bad decisions. One of Anthony's first speakers, Sandra Gregory, is a relevant example.

After working as an English teacher in Thailand, Sandra agreed to carry a small quantity of drugs in order to earn some much-needed cash. She was caught red-handed at the airport and sentenced to 25 years in gaol. Imprisoned in the so-called 'Bangkok Hilton' her prospects were grim, and even though her particular story has a happy ending, thanks to a pardon from the King of Thailand, similar incidents occur somewhere every Gap Year, always with painful outcomes for the people and families involved. As anyone who knows will tell you, prison is well worth avoiding, anywhere on earth!

In the UK, alcohol is not illegal. It is a socially approved drug – but a drug nevertheless, and its abuse affects many lives beyond those of the problem-drinkers themselves. Anthony McLellan knows about this first hand:

At 18 I was the envy of everyone I knew. I had it all. In 1975 I was in my early 30s and my life had been completely destroyed by alcohol. From the moment I struggled out of bed in the morning to the hours when I fell apart at night, the compulsion to drink had become an all-consuming obsession.

By that stage I drank, more or less, only because I had to. Heavily dependent drinkers often reach a point where, if the alcohol level in their system drops too low, their brains go haywire and they start to have fits – seizures – which can be fatal. A detox centre is the only place for drinkers like that, before any treatment can get started.

I knew all about that from first-hand experience as a young man. For the first five years of the 1970s I was in and out of hospital, being admitted for detoxification from my dependence to drink, and checking myself out as soon as I could walk again, clinging precariously to the wagon for a month or two, only to end up in another hospital within a few weeks of picking up a drink.

Once I'd started drinking, the dependency would return very quickly, and I dreaded being caught short without a bottle of something to stop me going into convulsions. I kept worse and worse company, embarked on a second doomed marriage, and my career (such as it was) descended into a helter-skelter of odd jobs, ambitious but ill-conceived ventures, and intermittent Prodigal Son returns to and fallings-out with the family firm I had done so little to advance over the years.

My sense of morality slid down with me. I would embark on insincere relationships wherever I could, I lied in my business dealings, and I couldn't care less how I got what I wanted, which by that stage was limited to drink and money. Without realising it, I had fallen off the cliff's edge and ended up a tangled mess on the rocks.

It was during one of these dreaded episodes when I'd foolishly gone without a drink for too long and found myself lying on the floor of a hotel bathroom, unable to get to my feet and waiting for the next seizure to overtake me, that I made what would turn out to be my last trip to a detox hospital.

A friend found me, dragged me to a phone box and got hold of my doctor for me. I told him that I needed another trip to hospital – just for a bit of a rest. He sounded unimpressed.

"And where do you want to go this time, Anthony? You know most of them as well as I do…"

"Oh, God, I don't know, can't you make it somewhere nice – you know, sit on the terrace, watch the yachts on the lake – I've heard of a place in Switzerland…"

He laughed like a drain, telling me I "must be joking". He got my friend on the line and told him to drive me to the nearest clinic, and to make sure I had half a bottle to take with me in the car or he'd have a corpse on his hands. My friend – a blacksmith as luck would have it – carried me to his Land Rover and bundled me to the clinic. A couple of orderlies wheeled me in, chatting away to me like old friends – I couldn't remember their names, but they knew who I was well enough.

After a few days of sedatives and food, I was up and about again, tottering around the ward and getting ready to make my escape. As usual, I couldn't wait to be shot of the beastly place. But, as I was sitting down in the dining room one night, my bag packed and carefully hidden under the bed, my customary escape funds of a five pound note concealed in my shoe, a woman sat down next to me and fixed me with a knowing gaze.

"You're off tonight, aren't you?" she said, raising a quizzical eyebrow.

"That's right" I said, wondering how she could tell.

"Don't go tonight. Stay – stay and talk to me."

"Oh, that's kind, but I'm feeling much better, thanks, I just need to get back to work and keep myself busy, I'll be…"

"Not for you… For me. I need someone to talk to. I'm so

lonely and frightened and I don't like it here. Please stay and talk to me. I'm scared to death."

It doesn't sound like much, but that woman taught me a lesson that was to shape the rest of my life – that talking to other alcoholics, and having concern for their problems as much as one's own, is the bedrock on which it becomes possible to build a life free of the torment of alcohol addiction. That night she took me to a meeting in the hospital, and there I heard a man talk who, in telling his experience, was telling mine.

I realised that maybe these meetings were the key to my future life without alcohol. It was possible, he said, to live a life without drink and to be happy at the same time – to live without that feeling of deprivation that had always led me back to the bottle in the past. I'm sure that I had heard the same message many times before, but this time it meant something. I decided to stay at the hospital and undergo their treatment programme.

Treatment in the 1970s was, in some ways, very similar to the way we do it now – it took place in small therapy groups of recovering addicts, led by one or two group facilitators, and we shared our stories, and fears, and shameful secrets, and challenged one another to do the same, and slowly we started to see how our emotional lives had been stunted by drink, and how we had come to rely on it as a means of fixing a deep-seated sense of self-disdain.

The weeks passed, and my understanding of my problem and my sense of wellbeing grew. I became highly motivated to help others to achieve the peace of mind that I had found and that had eluded me for so long. I soared out of that hospital on an up-draught of enthusiasm and it has never faltered since.

Before long I was invited to come back once every fortnight to talk to the new patients about how I was experiencing life after treatment. The first time I spoke to one of those groups, I knew I had found what I wanted to do – I felt fulfilled, useful even, for the first time in my life.

In time, I started to facilitate some of these sessions on my own, then to take groups for a full morning, spending more and more time each week working with the patients on the alcohol programme. As an appreciation of my input to their programme, the hospital paid for me to attend a conference on alcohol and drug addiction in Atlanta, Ga. As the only Englishman at the conference I was something of an object of interest.

My time in America led me to work in addiction programmes in hospitals in London during the 1980s and in 1990 I established a private practice as a counsellor, and started giving talks on alcohol and addiction to schools up and down the country.

I mentioned earlier the image of falling off a cliff. Whilst the majority of my life's work has been helping individuals and families pick up the pieces when they too have fallen from the cliff's edge, I also believe strongly in prevention: trying to build a fence at the top of that cliff to help young people from straying too close to the dangers of addiction.

These talks on prevention and awareness often trigger difficulties teenagers may already be experiencing with their families, and nearly always there are some who want to speak privately.

"My Mum drinks too much and I hate it when she's drunk"

"My parents are always arguing. I think they're getting divorced."

"How can you stop someone when they deny there's a problem?"

"My Father was doing fine after rehab but he's started drinking again. Will he be alright?"

To see a confused young person in emotional pain is almost unbearable. From time to time I have had the privilege, and I mean privilege, of being able to help them with a modicum of comfort and guidance.

Anthony McLellan started the McLellan Practice in 1990 and co-founded Charter Day Care Ltd in 2008.

What's so special about teenage stress?

Plenty, as Nicola Morgan explains

Nicola Morgan

However deeply you care about the wellbeing of your teenage charges, you might reasonably think there's nothing special about their stress. After all, they are human and their DNA is no different from ours. Given that adolescence is temporary and that there are exams and the big wide world at the end, you might think we should just tell them to knuckle down and get on with it, as we had to 'in our day'.

You might fluctuate between resignation and a gung ho attitude that it is all merely a matter of managing hormones and making sure teenagers start the day with a decent breakfast. "Wait till you have to pay a mortgage," you are tempted to say. Teaching or pastoral staff who take any of those attitudes risk missing some important, eye-opening truths, which can lead to useful changes in attitude, practice and consequence, both for you and the young people in your care.

Before I come to the differences, let me remind you quickly what stress is: a perfectly healthy and even essential biological response to a threat or need for urgent or strong action. All animals have it and it is designed to give us a better chance of survival in the face of attack and a better chance of winning the biological imperative to ambition and success. It involves the very rapid (quicker than our ability to make a decision) release of chemicals into the bloodstream, most importantly adrenaline and cortisol.

In the face of threat, these chemicals increase our heart-rate, pumping blood away from the skin and to where it is needed – the large muscles and the brain – and releasing glucose into the bloodstream to provide extra energy. It doesn't make us feel comfortable, but it does make us act and act faster, more strongly and with more focus and determination than otherwise.

Then the threat subsides; we've beaten it or escaped; and the chemicals can return to normal levels. The trouble with modern stress is that too often they don't because we have many small stresses and the response doesn't have a chance to settle down after each one.

Cortisol has a habit of building up and the possible effects over time include impaired immune system, learning and memory deficits, raised blood pressure, increased risk of stroke and heart attack, weight gain, depression and other mental illnesses.

The more immediate symptoms of suffering stress include the physical ones of headaches, stomach aches, racing heart and dizzy spells; and the more vague ones of feeling you can't cope or feeling panicky. But there are also a number of cognitive effects: if some parts of the brain are occupied by worry, there is less brainpower to perform other necessary tasks. The results include impaired ability to concentrate and perform on mental tasks and less self-control – loss of both fluid intelligence and executive control.

So, while stress is an important and positive biological function and while we can even *enjoy* it because it helps us achieve our best, prolonged or excessive stress is not something to welcome. To combat those negative effects, I argue that we need to understand what it does to us, recognise our own stressors, and include stress-relieving strategies in our lives so that we get the positive effects and not the negative build-up.

It's our job to help teenagers understand this, but, in order to help them properly, we have to understand what their stressors are. Which brings me to the original question: what is so special about teenage stress?

First, there are physical differences. Teenage brains and, therefore, bodies, behave slightly differently from those of adults in the face of a stressor. Based on brain-scanning and other tests over many studies, there is strong and fascinating evidence for increased reaction, during adolescence, to certain stressors.

We know that teenage brains not only react somewhat more strongly (in fMRI scanning) to an object of fear, but also are less good at 'learning' not to react to that stressor the next time. They may remain in a stress response for longer. That's very important when we remember that cortisol builds up if it's not relieved.

Linked to that, social embarrassment (a distinct stressor for teenagers) is processed somewhat differently, with different brain areas more active than adults' when visualising certain embarrassing situations. One of the most stressful and exercising events for a young person is to lose face in front of peers and the bodily response is very much one of reacting to threat.

The brain changes of puberty and beyond can be rapid and rapidly transformational, sowing confusion and ramping up chaotic emotions which can be hard to control. The very existence of these emotions, and the speed at which they can arise, can cause stress, self-doubt and anxiety out of all proportion to their actual threat.

Changing bodies can produce pressure, with teenagers experiencing greatest upset when they develop either more slowly or more quickly than their peers. 'Hating' your body is terribly common amongst teenagers and, again, those tiny remarks can hurt more than seems likely to a bystander.

Moving on from the physical differences, we have the social ones. Teenagers are less protected from frightening things than when they were younger, when they could take their fears to an adult who would comfort them with a whole raft of semi-truths or white lies rightly designed to reassure. But adolescents know more about the real possibilities and are less easily reassured: their fears may spiral, becoming intrusive thoughts or obsessions.

Sometimes they think they are alone in their thoughts or obsessions, that no one else has the same worries as them, that they are in some way crazy. They may not dare ask if others feel the same in case the answer reinforces their fear. Sometimes friends don't give the right answers, as they may be wrapped up in their own worries. Sometimes teenagers can't talk about their inner fears to the people closest to them, in case they let the genie out of the bottle and it cannot be unsaid.

Obviously, too, teenagers lack the necessary life experience to know how they react under pressure and what pressure feels like. We learn much from experience. The first time we meet a difficult situation, it's harder to know how to react or what it means. Teenagers are usually meeting these situations for the first time, often in public, in the middle of a bombardment of potential stressors. The bulk of these stressors take place in school: when I surveyed teenagers while writing *The Teenage Guide to Stress*, by far the two biggest causes of stress were peer/friendship issues and exams.

Peer pressure is an immensely powerful aspect of adolescence. It has a positive reason: the need to find your new tribes as you prepare to leave the security (ideally) of your family for the groups you'll need in independent life. You have to learn how to press the right buttons in different people, learn how to get on, to be leader or team-player and which sort of each.

This drive towards new tribes often brings unpleasant side-effects as teenagers experiment with different behaviours and encounter rejection or teasing or tiny comments that accidentally undermine, comments that adults usually brush off but which, for many adolescents, are impossible to ignore.

None of that litany of teenage stressors is much different from how it was 'in our day'. But there *are* two main new sources of stress for today's teenagers: exam pressure and the internet. Yes, we had exam stress, too – twice: two nightmare periods of cramming which dominated two summer terms. And only a few of us expected to go to university.

Public exams now are more frequent and spread over a longer period of time, and the stakes, arguably, are higher, with more pressure to get to university and acquire as many pieces of paper as possible. As we are biologically designed to deal with discrete periods of stress, two separate summer terms is not a big deal, but relentless pressure to perform continuously over several years is something we are not designed for. And it's what can crack us if we don't learn skills to deal with it.

And the internet: wonderful opportunities to connect with people around the world and to acquire far more knowledge than I had in my narrow-minded rustic adolescence, but also the opportunity to be bombarded with stressful interaction 24/7. Bullying no longer stops when you close your front door – it continues through the night.

Your ill-judged comment or your very ill-judged photo now has the potential to be mocked and abused by vastly more than the few nasty classmates who might have ridiculed me. And the internet doesn't just bring bullying, but even more pressure to conform and to be social. How many 'friends' can one person manage? How many people 'liked' your status update and does it really matter? And if social networking distracts *me* from my work, how can it not distract many younger people?

Continued overleaf →

Stress

Yes, there is something special about teenage stress, but there are two important aspects that are the same for all of us. First, the symptoms, including making mistakes and being more snappy. The symptoms impact on school work and relationships, the two areas which cause teenagers most stress. Although stress affects us in the same way, I suggest that we are less forgiving of teenagers when they make mistakes or behave less than perfectly. We don't show them that stress may be the cause and that if we could deal with the stress we'd eliminate some of the mistakes.

The other aspect that's the same for all of us is the set of strategies for attacking stress. As adults, we should all know how to deal with our stress – in theory – even if we don't always manage to put it into practice. The good news is that all the same principles apply for teenagers.

One of the most heart-warming things I've found in talking to pupils is how keen they are to take on board some simple strategies. The principles I work to in talks and in my Brain Sticks teaching resources, are:

1. Learn to reduce panic and acute stress with a quick breathing exercise – there's a free audio on my website on the teenage brain/stress pages. www.nicolamorgan.com/category/brains/.
2. Build relaxing times into every day – include exercise, being social, hobbies, reading for pleasure and quiet time (*without a screen*).
3. Believe that relaxation is not a luxury but an essential that will make you work and feel better.
4. Remember that everything passes and what you're worrying about now is normal and will change. Talk to someone before letting it get too much.

Everything I've learnt while researching and writing about the teenage brain and mental health has led me to one conclusion: that the more each of us, of whatever age, understands about how our brains work, why we think, behave and feel as we do, the better we can manage our brains, to make them work as well as possible, and get the most out of them.

If we can help teenagers to understand and manage their own stress, to see how it affects their work, relationships and wellbeing, then we can make their lives easier – and ours.

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Nicola Morgan is a multi-award-winning writer for and about teenagers. Her classic books, Blame my brain – the teenage brain revealed *and* The teenage guide to stress *(both Walker Books), are now supported by extensive, innovative and inspiring teaching resources on the brain and mental health, BRAIN STICKS™. She writes the free Brain Sane newsletter, aimed at schools and parents. www.nicolamorgan.com*

HERE & THERE

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

Balls to Bullying

Gareth Thomas, the 100-times capped former Wales Rugby skipper, who leads the Balls to Bullying campaign which launched in 2014, visits schools all over the country to work with pupils on building resilience and boosting self-confidence.

Gareth has recently spoken of how his own schools days were blighted by bullying: "I was picked on by my rugby teammates. When we went swimming, they would smack me with their wet towels. I got spat on, too. It was degrading, but I didn't want to tell anyone because these were my rugby mates and I wanted to be in the team. I'm not sure why it happened, I wasn't small or weak. I think it was because I didn't stand up for myself. It started with a little thing – I was probably singled out because my rugby boots weren't the best – and then it built. Going to school eventually became a nightmare."

Lauren Seager-Smith, national coordinator of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, said: "Ultimately, bullying is a behaviour choice, one which parents, carers, teachers and the community must work together to change at grass roots level; educating that bullying in any form is wrong, and that any environment that encourages bullying, or shows indifference to prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable. Gareth is a wonderful advocate for anti-bullying work so we're delighted to see his involvement in Anti-Bullying Week to help all children and young people to take the lead on changing behaviour and to stop bullying for all."

Us versus them or harmonious triangle?

Sara Pullman explores the tricky issue of parent-teacher relationships and attitudes in independent schools

Sara Pullman

Most of us will have read articles in the press that focus on the frustration and complaints of teachers who feel that parents expect the earth from private schools and assume that any problems must be the school's fault.

As someone for whom teaching in schools was a second career and as the parent of children at an independent school for which we pay the full fees, I feel my unusual position allows me to write this article in defence of parents and to suggest a more healthy approach in the staffroom, even if I might seem to be a devil's advocate!

My first career was in the British Army as an education and training specialist officer, with a final tour as a deputy head of an Army training school. During a variety of posts over 16 years I was used to adult soldiers and officers giving clear and often blunt feedback and evaluation to instructors.

Except with the junior soldiers, aged 16-18, there were no parents in sight, and any issues raised on course evaluations or verbal wash-ups were seen as valuable ways of informing potential improvements. As my husband stayed in the military, we have moved location frequently, and my sons were on their fifth school by the ages of 9 and 11, whilst I have been a parent at six different independent schools and have worked for three more as a maths teacher.

I have really enjoyed teaching and involvement in extra-curricular activities. It was a privilege to work at each of the three schools and I want to state clearly that my husband and I are really happy with most aspects of our sons' current school. But no school or teacher is perfect, just as no child or parent is perfect.

Staff may have a more narrow viewpoint of what is important in life if they have done well academically at school, been a sporting gladiator, musical, a prefect and so on, and then gone straight back into the school environment from university, sometimes to the same school they attended and even, perhaps, staying there for their whole careers. Such teachers may come to believe that the school can never be wrong.

In my experience of three staff rooms to date, I have heard no recognition of the emotional sacrifice made by parents who have only sent their children to board very reluctantly. Most teachers, I suspect, have children at local schools or the school at which they work, and they can see and hug them every day and be as involved as they wish.

Parents in the military are between a rock and a hard place and expat families or those working for global corporations or in the diplomatic service are faced with the same dilemma. Do they keep their children with them, necessitating constant moves, or do they 'send them away'?

They come under pressure to send their children to boarding school at an earlier age than they would wish because that is the only way they can achieve stability of education whilst following their careers and even living together occasionally!

The emphasis on marketing that now prevails in most independent schools results in many promises to parents: an array of extra-curricular activities, sport, dance, drama, art, as well as 'top' results in academic subjects and usually something on pastoral care along the lines of "every child is cared for as an individual".

It is no wonder, therefore, that the impression given is that every child will succeed and be happy – if you send them here! There is never any mention in the prospectus or website that the youngsters will have to work really hard; that holidays will be filled with revision for examinations, work experience, university visits (organised or supervised by parents), DofE expeditions or other school trips (at the extra expense of parents); nor that parents will have to ask about the psychometric test results that give teachers an indication of the child's potential and against which their progress will be measured; nor are parents given any indication about the level of communication with staff that is considered acceptable.

I have frequently been dismayed by comments overhead or made in conversation with me by both parents and staff at all nine schools I have been involved with, concerning parent-staff relations and attitudes to each other. The common complaint is that 20% of parents generate 80% of the work and, whilst there is no question that some parents are easier to deal with than others, I have found that even parents who are labelled as 'difficult' are actually very reasonable once a little empathy is shown.

Parents are expected to attend school events, support sports matches (without interfering or commenting), donate generously to fundraising, send thank you gifts, and spread the word among their community and friends in praise of the school. Above all, a 'good' parent should neither contact their child or staff too often nor overreact to mobile phone calls from their children.

At parent-teacher meetings, staff hope parents will hang on the teacher's every word, only asking vague questions such as "how is my child getting on?" and not try to hog teachers for more than the allotted five minutes. Above all, parents who question any aspect of school, or indicate that they may know more about their child than a teacher does, may be black-listed as 'tricky'.

So when should a parent wade in? Difficult. When a maths teacher deliberately didn't teach much algebra (to a Year 8 scholarship class) because he didn't like it or believe it useful, should I have raised this issue? When one son broke both arms (pretty obvious with two bright plaster casts) and no laptop or other arrangements were made for internal exams – should I have contacted the school or left him to struggle on, barely able to write and subsequently be put in the lower ability sets?

Continued overleaf →

Should I express a concern with the staff or simply moan about it on the touchline at matches with other parents? Will any issue I raise be met with "well, if you're not happy then move your child", as has twice been the response to very minor queries. For every teacher's story of 'parents from hell', parents can point to times when teachers have not thought a situation through, not made the effort to get to know a child who is reserved in nature, or not treated pupils in the way they would like their own children to be treated.

I appreciate that if children think that teachers and parents are not working together they may try to play adults off against each other. This can be avoided by mutual trust and respect and open contact. Parents are told: "if you do not believe everything your child tells you about school, we will not believe everything we hear about home".

This tends to be part of a welcome-to-the-school speech in which parents are asked to trust the school to know what they are doing, with subtle hints that parents don't really know that much about their youngsters compared to the experienced teachers and that we are leaving our caterpillars in the care of professionals who will deliver us butterflies at the end of x years.

As a teacher, I recognise that getting to know classes of teenagers provides a good context against which to assess a particular teenager and any bad patch they may be going through, and this has been invaluable in helping me manage my own sons. For their part, parents have family characteristics and experience against which to judge their offspring.

Of course it may be that the characteristics that staff are criticising in pupils are shared by their parents, or are not recognised as a problem at home. All in all, teachers should not expect parents to have a detached logical approach where their children are concerned.

Teachers are not always good at dealing with adult opinions or enquiries. At one school a learning support colleague came to see me in a bit of a fluster about a pupil because the father had emailed her about progress. I opened the message and read it aloud in a 'concerned loving parent' tone of voice and she realised it was just a request for information not a complaint about her at all!

The tone in which we mentally read our emails makes a huge difference. In addition do not, particularly as a new member of staff, let a child think that it is anything but normal to have contact with a parent if a pupil may not be performing to potential.

An astute teenager will note with a smile: 'I think Mr X is really worried, he's been chatty with me this week, it really seems to make a difference that you asked to pop in and see him' – although my sons tend to accuse me of always being on the teacher's side. If parents feel their child will get more attention and better 'service' if they make a fuss, they will continue doing so!

It also makes me cringe when I hear a teacher make a comment such as: "I'm pleased you've got a better grade in your exam retake Joe, now your mother will stop giving me a hard time…" which may be true, but is undermining the concerned parent's relationship with her teenager.

So, what might be done to improve parent-teacher relationships? Here are some suggestions, not in any particular order.

Don't

As a Head, possibly anxious to tick Ofsted boxes, invite parents to communicate honestly and openly if you are going to react badly to any that take you at your word.

Forget that parents may be sending emails at the end of a long day's work and when they are missing their children – first week of term and after half-term are especially tough when a full house has become an empty one.

Forget that parents can feel cut off from their children's lives at school and even that they are being kept out of them by staff.

Forget that customer service applies to any business and that marketing will raise expectations.

Patronise parents, many of whom are intelligent and well-educated and most of whom are sufficiently successful in life to be earning enough to pay the fees; or imply that you know their child better than they do, whether you feel that is true or not.

Forget that some teachers may have limited experience of life outside school compared to parents who may come from a different culture or value different characteristics.

Let pupils see you reacting to contact with parents in a way that makes them think it can be used by them.

Forget that even the 'best' schools are not perfect.

Expect parents to be rational rather than emotional where their children are concerned.

Do

Include parent-teacher relationships in staff induction and inset, as this should be part of the job-description.

Encourage staff to empathise with parents and read emails positively, acknowledging both the message and the viewpoint.

Encourage staff to write clear reports that sound as if they know and like the pupils and that end on a positive note or target.

Treat pupils as you would like your own child or younger sibling to be treated.

Try to make parents feel their opinions are taken account of and avoid knee jerk reactions.

Communicate as early as possible about any sports commitments, trips or other activities that will impinge on school holiday time or Sundays.

Communicate clearly and comprehensively about anything parents are expected to do in terms of supervising revision or work during holidays, arranging university visits or work experience and avoid relying on pupils to pass information on.

Keep parents up-to-date with what is changing or has changed in the education system since their school days.

Prepare carefully for parent-teacher meetings and be happy if any parents have taken the time to do so.

Apologise to parents if there is a valid complaint – teachers are not servants, but they are providing a service and if this has fallen short in any way, then own up to it.

Well, that was cathartic … but I do hope it provides useful food for thought for some of you and I wish you all very happy and open parent-teacher relationships in future!

Sara Pullman (BSc, PGCE, MA(Ed) CFCIPD, FITOL) has taught in all sorts of environments and is currently doing so 'on the road', accompanying her husband.

Girls go Gold

Olympic and Paralympic medal winners inspire girls to pursue a career in sport

Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE and Olympic and World Champion rower Helen Glover were among the elite athletes who spoke to almost 600 girls at the Girls Go Gold event. They were joined by European indoor 800m champion Jenny Meadows, London 2012 double sculls Olympic gold medallist Anna Watkins and former England netball international Tracey Neville.

The conference was organised by members of the Girls' Schools Association (GSA) and took place in two venues to make sure as many girls as possible could attend.

Girls Go Gold is an annual event that aims to inspire up-and-coming sportswomen, some of whom are already competing nationally and internationally, and to inform girls about the many careers that are available to them in the world of sport.

Delegates include 14-17 year-old girls from the GSA and other schools. Sue Hincks, Head of Bolton School Girls' Division which hosted the northern event, said: "We have been staggered by how much interest there has been in this conference. We could have easily filled the seats several times over."

The GSA represents the Heads of UK independent girls' schools and has a worldwide associate membership. Almost 88% of GSA schools educate girls who compete at national level in their chosen sport. Seven former GSA students – including gymnast Beth Tweddle – won medals at the London 2012 Olympic Games, spearheading a new golden age for women's sport in the UK.

Alice Phillips, current GSA president and Head of St Catherine's School, Bramley, which hosted the southern event, said: "Britain's sportswomen are proving that they are among the best in the world. As the educators of thousands of young girls, it's our responsibility to inspire and inform them about the tremendous opportunities that sport has to offer."

One of those at the Bolton School conference was 15 year-old Ellie Broome, an aspiring golfer in Year 11. Here is what she made of the Girls Go Gold experience:

The message from both the key-note speakers was inspiring because it was true! Helen Glover, the Olympic, World, World Cup and European Champion who is also a world record holder, talked about aiming high and seizing your opportunities! At tough times you must remember why you made 'The Decision' to commit to the sport you are doing, because you love it even when it's hard. I know that when I get up early on cold and wet mornings it's because I enjoy what I'm doing.

Helen started as a cross-country runner and only later became a rower. She advised everyone to stay open to new opportunities, as we may not have found the sport that's right for us yet.

Unlike Helen, Jenny Meadows found her passion for running at the age of six and three-quarters and has dedicated her whole life to the one sport she loves. She described some of the times when she failed or hit a rocky patch in her sporting career, such as losing at her first national event, and how she used this to motivate her when she returned a year later to the same competition – and won! It was really good to hear that professional athletes are just like us: human, capable of nerves and mistakes.

Presentations from Bolton University on sports rehabilitation and sports science showed how many different jobs there are in these areas. There were some interesting practical activities to undertake, from strapping an ankle in just the right place to learning from an electronic anatomy table on which you could dissect a person and put any mistakes right – something worth learning before you tackle a live patient!

In sports science, we measured our own different physical strengths, such as how strong you are, how fast your feet move and how flexible you are. We used the University's specialist equipment including electronic timing gates for the agility run, a pressure pad to measure jump height and, of course, the amazing cycling training machine, the Wattbike.

As BBC sport producer Victoria Cotton said in her presentation, sports media can allow people who love sport, but are never going to be professional athletes, to still make sport their career. The work of a BBC sport producer covers a very wide range and we were amazed at the sheer number of things that go into broadcasting an event such as the Olympics.

The sports journalist Sonia Oxley gave us an insight into her job which is, she said, "in real terms a privileged position". As a sports journalist, I would be able to interview all the sports people I admire and see all the events I would love to see as part of the job – and up close! It sounded brilliant but challenging as well, with football match reports required immediately the final whistle blows, and, as everyone knows, things can change at the last moment in sport.

But it wasn't all talks. A netball workshop in the middle of the day gave us a complete change and we were thrilled to be coached by Tracey Neville, who coaches the Manchester Thunder team which is at the top of the Superleague. Most challenging was the passing exercise which involved handling two balls at the same time!

Ellie Broome.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson

Helen Glover

In the southern conference at St Catherine's, 17 year-old Francesca Tamblyn (Year 13) who plays tennis, netball and lacrosse, was also very enthusiastic:

Yesterday two incredible Olympic gold medallists, Baroness Grey-Thompson and Anna Watkins, visited St Catherine's School, Bramley, to inspire a captivated audience of young sportswomen during the GSA's Girls Go Gold Conference 2014.

A highlight for many of the 360 delegates was when Anna allowed her Olympic gold medal to be passed around during her talk. Holding her medal made her success seem so much more of a reality and also made her accomplishments seem far more achievable for those listening, especially since Anna didn't discover rowing until after she left school. The clear message of her talk was that you don't have to be perfect to accomplish great things and that you shouldn't try and fit the mould of someone else. Her description of herself as an 'Olympic Champion and Imperfect Rower' encompassed this belief entirely.

Anna explained how different people succeed in different ways, particularly specifying examples of how other boats in Team GB obtained their medals. Anna also elaborated on her relationship with Katherine Granger and how they fitted so well and were so close, despite Anna's love for facts and figures and Katherine's more emotional attitude. The exciting news that Anna is expecting her second child was received with delight and I am sure all those present wish her well for the future.

Baroness Grey-Thompson described her determination to succeed after being paralysed at the age of seven. She encouraged the audience never to fear putting yourself on the line in order to achieve your goals. Baroness Grey-Thompson, who has competed in five Paralympic Games and won 11 gold medals, explained how she refused to listen to those who doubted her and overcame her fear of failure.

Her dedication to her sport was clear – the revelation that she missed just four training sessions during her entire career and did not win a race for the first four years of her career was very inspirational, if a little daunting. She urged us to make the most of our time as athletes and get on with the training we know has to be done, but also to value education. She stressed how competing at a high level cannot be a life-long career and that education is what provides opportunities after a successful sporting career.

What Baroness Grey-Thompson has achieved since competing is quite remarkable – her position in the House of Lords is just one of many roles she has fulfilled. We all felt privileged to have heard from such an amazing woman and were extremely grateful to Baroness Grey-Thompson for finding the time to come, especially considering the significance of the day politically, both North and South of the border!

Aside from the key-note speeches, the elite athletes and GCSE or A level PE students attending the conference had the opportunity to attend mini-seminars put on by the University of Surrey. These varied from an outdoor practical session based on improving agility and speed to an informative session about how nutrition can affect performance. Tamsin Greenway's talk about progressing from county level to the Commonwealth Games in netball was particularly memorable since she spoke with such honesty about the challenges of both playing and coaching.

Mark Pain, twice Sports Photographer of the Year, also shared some of his most spectacular photos with the group, many of which were taken during London 2012. The content of the Conference was very varied and I am sure that every student who attended came away inspired by the talks from such remarkable people.'

The most important message in the Girls Go Gold Conference 2014 was to keep participating in and enjoying sport of all kinds throughout your life.

Linearity rules – for now

Kevin Stannard takes a positive line

Kevin Stannard

"Examinations make good servants, and poor masters." So said the wise and pugnacious T H Huxley, in 1860. Prescient, too, given that the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms (making access to the civil service subject to *what* rather than *who* you knew) were only five years old; and those quarrelsome siblings, the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, were younger still.

Huxley, of course, was spot on. Unfortunately, virtually everyone in charge of education since W E Forster has chosen to use the examination system as a policy lever to force change in secondary schools from outside and above. Independent schools do not have to follow such changes slavishly, but they are caught in the double-bind of needing to show pupil progress with reference to national cohorts; and needing to take account of the demands of the end-users of qualifications – most crucially the universities.

The current reform agenda is dominated by two items: making exams harder, and making them linear. The two are not logically connected, although it is widely assumed that linearity will raise the bar.

Beginning in September 2015, A level teaching in a tranche of mainstream subjects will have to take into account the fact that assessment is fully linear, with little or no coursework, but with additional content and greater stress on extended writing. The other subjects follow a year later. Most importantly, the AS qualification will be decoupled and won't count towards the full A level grade.

Whether this constitutes a *Brave New World* or *Back to the Future* is not really the issue. The important thing is to decide whether to react churlishly to the changes, making as little change as possible (negative independence), or to be proactive, embracing the changes (making a declaration of positive independence). Maybe linearity is actually a better vehicle to carry our wider educational aims.

It's not just a question of choosing a new specification and teaching as before. The evidence shows that when teachers adopt linear exams *without changing the way they plan, teach and assess*, results suffer. This is because linearity demands a fundamentally different approach. The challenge resides in establishing motivation and pace from the start, without high-stakes exams to aim for in Year 12; reassuring pupils about progress along the way; and managing the implications of having no opportunity to bank results, and no second chances.

What, if anything, will we have lost? Post *Curriculum 2000* research found that AS encouraged greater didacticism in the classroom, reflecting content-heavy specifications and the distorting effect of impending exams. As a sixth former famously fumed in a letter to the *London Review of Books*, 'We don't spend our … lessons doing anything very much beyond trying to understand the marking scheme.'

AS provided fewer opportunities to apply learning and consolidate conceptual development and it discouraged joined-up thinking across the subject. Criticism grew of the 'learn it, forget it' culture and the resulting 'modular mayhem'. In this context, little wonder that schools sought linear alternatives that better prepared students for undergraduate study – IB, Cambridge Pre-U, even doing A level in a linear way.

It is sometimes suggested that putting all the exams at the end increases stress among pupils because the terminal stakes are so high. It is, however, not at all clear that this ends up being more stressful than having lots of high-stakes hoops along the way.

What might we gain from linearity? Those who have taught linearly can attest that with terminal exams teaching isn't constantly interrupted by assessments at the end of each module. Knowledge, understanding and skills can be developed over a longer period of time. Links can be made between topics, encouraging deeper learning. There is more time to innovate and explore cognate topics, and greater opportunity to develop thinking skills through extended analytical writing.

Weaker learners get time to develop, while stronger learners get space to explore. The summer term in Year 12 can be reclaimed from interminable test-prep. Done well, linearity reasserts the primacy of teaching over testing.

One size, of course, does not fit all. Studies suggest that linearity suits some subjects (humanities?) better than others (maths?). And what about the gender effect?

Research is ambivalent. Some studies argue that boys are more likely to take advantage of a modular exams structure (it keeps their nose to the grindstone), but others conclude that boys do better in terminal exam conditions (the big push at the end). There is a widely held view that, typically, girls prefer the sequential style of modular exams, with the ability to bank results along the way. But there is no evidence that girls in practice have taken less well to either the IB or Cambridge Pre-U.

Success with linear exams depends on being proactive on several fronts: choosing the specification, planning and teaching the programme of study, and designing the assessment framework.

In **choosing the specification**, things to consider include the link with the GCSE/IGCSE specification in a subject; the availability of support and resources from the exam board (it's a buyers' market and schools are the buyers), and the balance of interests and expertise within the department. But there is time, if the school is really on the front foot, to consider properly linear alternatives to A level, such as Cambridge Pre-U.

In **planning a programme of study**, the stress must be on planning the course *as a whole*, and deciding on the *order* of topics, the *time* allocation, the *pace* of teaching. Effective programmes will plan clear links between topics, include opportunities to revisit topics, and leave adequate time for revision.

Teaching and learning, too, need to be calibrated to linear exams. With 'distant' linear exams to work towards, compartmentalised learning must give way to a 'narrative arc' – involving an open-ended approach to individual lessons, building on prior knowledge, making explicit links to other topics, developing transferable skills, sign-posting the route; yet avoiding the 'don't worry, it'll all become clear at the end…' fall-back. Successful linear programmes require pupils to take more effective ownership of their own learning; and the constructive use of private study and homework becomes crucial.

The final parameter is the **assessment framework**. With no high-stakes external assessment at the mid-way point, either to bank or confirm progress, a more proactive approach is needed. Terminal exams require regular, formative, cumulative, authentic assessment. High quality marking and feedback must be based on exam criteria and mark schemes. Tests need to be both summative and formative – providing both diagnosis and prognosis.

In this respect, AS exams were never very good formative tools, the results coming after weeks of holiday, with little opportunity or inclination to go through them again in detail. Instead, imagine a summer exam at the end of Year 12 that authentically models the 'real thing', that tests what pupils might be expected to know and be able to do at this point in the course; that points towards likely grades at the end of the course, identifying areas needing to be re-visited; a test that gives meaningful feedback – *within days*. Imagine a proper end of year exam.

Teachers instinctively understand that *how* we teach is as important as *what* we teach. But how we *teach* is influenced by how we *test*. Linearity offers us an exam framework that we can work with, because it offers fewer hoops and more freedom to teach in a joined-up way.

One reason for holding back from embracing linearity might be the uncertainty imposed by the impending general election, and Labour's apparent intention to re-couple AS and A level. But for independent schools, the move to linearity should be based on the educational case, and whatever the future of this particular reform package, there will always be opportunities to do things linearly.

When A level was last linear, pre-2000, it was clear that it did not suit everyone – hence the introduction of AS and modularity. There has to be choice, and there ought to be a variety of qualification routes through the sixth form.

For schools with able pupils aiming for academic courses at university, the case for linearity is strong. Let's not just accept it. Let's embrace it.

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

HERE & THERE

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

Science and engineering event for girls

Burgess Hill School for Girls hosted a science and technology event in October 2014. Girls from The Towers Convent School, Oakmeeds, Downlands and Brighton & Hove High School were also among those challenged to engage with the inspirational speakers and consider the application of knowledge and practical skills in a diverse range of scientific fields.

The day provided a real insight into the world of work in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM). There is a significant demand in the work place for highly skilled workers in all of these areas. The girls listened to a wide range of talks from highly experienced, well qualified and well informed speakers that enabled them to explore areas that they may not have encountered before. Speakers included mechanical engineers, geoscientists and engineers; a PhD student from the nanoanalysis of plastic electronic materials and devices group at Imperial College; the senior fingerprint expert at Essex Police; a research associate at Great Ormond Street Hospital; the principal engineer for MacLaren Automotive Ltd; and the diabetic research group at the University of Brighton.

Flipping homework or flipping learning?

Rod Jackson describes King Alfred School's continuing commitment to research and the findings of their recent conference on homework

One of the most exciting and controversial developments in education in recent years has been the importance placed on research and evidence in both educational policy making and in classroom practice. Dr Ben Goldacre and his paper 'Building evidence into education'; Tom Bennett, teacher, blogger and founder of researchEd; John Tomsett, Head Teacher and blogger; Carl Hendrick, Wellington College's head of research; Professor Robert Coe of the University of Durham; the Institute of Education's newly launched Research and Development network; John Hattie, academic and author – these are but a few of the more influential voices.

The King Alfred School (KAS), a small co-educational 4-18 independent school in north London, was founded in 1898 as an avowedly 'rational school' which, from its first moments, espoused the importance of taking cognisance of the latest educational research and contributing towards it. Far from merely riding the wave of the current *zeitgeist*, the idea of the 'teacher-researcher' has a long history at KAS.

This year our annual conference was on the topic of homework. The King Alfred School Society, which sponsors the conferences, always intended them to be embedded in the life of the school community and to form part of a cycle of research, debate, self-reflection and subsequent action that would have a real and lasting impact on classroom practice. 'Homework' seemed a suitable and relevant topic for our 2014 conference and one likely to arouse strong views within our community and beyond.

Current homework guidelines

In March 2012 the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, put aside the official guidelines set by his predecessor, David Blunkett, which stipulated how much homework children should be set, leaving it instead for Head Teachers to decide. This action brought homework back to the forefront of national educational debate.

At KAS we were never bound by those guidelines and have always walked our own path with a sense of confidence in our rational, child-centred approach. In the upper school [Years 7 - 13], we have no fixed homework timetable – teachers are encouraged to set homework at a point where it is useful and relevant. Students negotiate with their teachers and form tutors to ensure that there is an appropriate balance and spread of work.

We believe that this enhances the teachers' sense of professionalism and enables students to develop independence and self-regulation. In the lower school [Reception - Year 6], no formal homework is set, with the exception of reading with a parent and learning spellings and times tables.

King Alfred School homework research

We asked Elizabeth Dawson, formerly a primary school teacher and now senior lecturer in Education at the University of Cumbria, to produce a 'scoping paper' that would synthesise current academic thinking on homework. The paper she produced is a wonderfully clear and concise summary of some very complex ideas. One of the key statements is sometimes lost in the business of school life: 'for homework to be effective it should be planned and designed with even greater care than classroom activities.'

We also asked Elizabeth to design a questionnaire for pupils in Years 6 to 13, staff and parents, and to conduct a series of focus group interviews with these constituencies. As well as disseminating a 'literature review' of current academic thinking, we thereby consulted our own community on how they feel homework functions in our context.

The results were interesting! Parents and pupils, particularly in the GCSE years, agreed that homework can be a cause of family tension and argument: 76% of Year 10s and 11s stated that they argued with their parents about homework, and half of parents believed that homework does not help their relationships with their children.

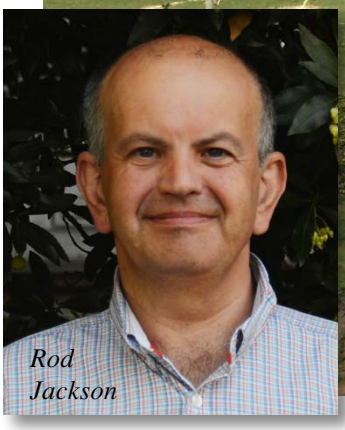
There was a difference between how helpful parents think they are being and how helpful children feel their parents are being: only 4% of parents think they don't understand their children's homework compared with 33% of Year 10-13 pupils who know they don't! Interestingly, only a third of pupils felt that homework leaves them insufficient time for other activities, and over half the pupils surveyed think they are able to organise their homework schedule, although parents were not so sure.

Parents and pupils agreed that practice is the most useful type of homework, especially for subjects like mathematics, a view consistent with the research literature. There was complete agreement amongst pupils, parents and staff that even at GCSE or A level, pupils should receive no more than 15 hours each week and that more would be counter-productive.

Staff and parents agreed that pupils should have homework in Year 6, but there was less consensus surrounding how much. Interestingly, the majority of pupils and parents believed that homework promotes independent learning and the development of study skills, a view not well supported in the research literature.

Homework conference speakers

Our conference offered a further opportunity to gain insight from experts from outside our community, to reflect on our own practice and to be challenged. Our speakers were a mixture of academics and classroom teachers.



Rod Jackson

King Alfred School.

Professor Susan Hallam of the Institute of Education placed research into homework firmly within the context of current thinking about learning in its widest sense. Developments in neuroscience have helped us gain some understanding of changes that take place within the brain when learning takes place, but these changes are highly specific to what is learned and how it is learned. Learning involves the development of expertise, a complex process of the acquisition of entwined knowledge and skills, and this paradigm challenges notions of ability.

Researching homework is problematic because of difficulties inherent in measuring outcomes and in determining accurately what is actually happening at home. At primary level, there is no consistent causal link between time spent on homework and attainment, whilst at secondary level there is a link, but it is curvilinear. Research on the impact of different types of homework is limited and results lack clarity.

However, we can say that homework should allow for individual initiative and creativity; it should promote understanding and self-confidence; teachers should provide sufficient guidance and support; homework clubs can be useful; and so are approaches that encourage self-monitoring on the part of pupils.

Mark Creasy, primary school teacher and author, presented his concept 'unhomework' in which students are given great choice over the format and nature of their homework as well as its assessment, with the aim of making their homework more purposeful and inspiring. Mark proposes three key elements:

> The '5Rs' – respect, resilience, relationships, rights and responsibilities.
>
> Three ground rules – work can be presented in any format; work should meet a target for improvement or applying an approach in a new way; pupils set the deadline and must meet it.
>
> Three questions – what is the focus of the work? What is the purpose? What are the success criteria?

Alfie Kohn, American academic, author and guru of the progressive education movement, presented a brilliantly argued polemic completely debunking any arguments presented in favour of homework at any age level.

Alfie's basic premise was that there is no good evidence for homework having any of the positive effects its proponents claim for it and that schools have no business in dictating what happens within the family home. The audience, depending on their preconceptions, were inspired or exasperated, but certainly challenged!

Our final speakers were two more classroom teachers, both from Caterham School: Kim Wells, their director of learning and teaching, and Adam Webster, their director of digital learning. Adam and Kim, using Caterham's iPad 'rollout' as their starting point, presented a fascinating, technically up-to-the minute, interactive account of one of the hottest topics in educational circles at the moment, 'flipped learning'.

The basic premise is well established, that class time is valuable and should be spent on interactions between learners and teachers, with the pupils using homework time to ensure that they have done the work in advance to make these interactions as meaningful and creative as possible.

The speakers showed just what is possible when the notion of the 'flipped classroom' is married to the latest iPad technology. Teachers and students can record lectures or presentations and in a moment share them in a safely monitored environment with their pupils or classmates. Electronic distribution of high quality research materials and texts allows pupils to manipulate these materials creatively and then communicate them further.

This is homework but not as we have known it!

Rod Jackson is head of upper school and head of academic progress at King Alfred School.

Third formers thrive on the Trivium

Oundle's innovative staff explain how they are improving intellectual challenge

The new academic year has brought with it a new course, Trivium, for third formers (Year 9s) at Oundle School. Designed to place learning for its own sake at the heart of the curriculum, Trivium is a course based purely on 'interestingness'.

It complements the school's already extensive Voluntaries programme and Extended Project Qualifications (EPQs), encouraging pupils to extend their learning beyond subjects for academic assessment.

Fifty eight Voluntaries courses are open to first to fourth form (Year 7-9) pupils including photography, mah-jong, climbing, origami, astronomy, palaeontology and yoga. Ben Evans, Oundle's Director of Studies, describes the programme:

> Voluntaries represent the chance to broaden pupils' academic horizons, and to explore artistic, literary, cultural or sporting activities without ever having to be tested on what they have learned and experienced. Voluntaries are an opportunity to delve deeper into things that really interest pupils, or they could be a chance to have a go at something that they have never done before. Above all, they are supposed to be fun.

In addition to traditional A levels and Pre-Us, pupils may choose to produce an individual project in an area of particular interest via EPQs rather than opting to follow a taught course for their sixth form extension. The final project will be completed by the end of the lower sixth, and may take the form of a 5000-word report or a 'product' (which may be a CD, DVD, crafted object, original composition, work of art) with an accompanying 1000 word report.

Each project will be assessed to gain the AQA Extended Project Qualification. Last year saw the introduction of EPQ Level 2 Projects at Oundle, which requires a high level of independent work and original thought. It is a stand-alone qualification completed in one year where pupils can gain an A* grade equivalent to half a GCSE.

Trivium

Twenty teachers at Oundle are involved in teaching the new Trivium course, and their brief is to educate; to introduce pupils to ideas and culture; to sow seeds; and to broaden the educational experience. The topics explored vary from group to group: whilst one class is studying the works of Koestler, another is immersed in the art of Berlin; one set of pupils is discussing ethical aspects of technological advance, whilst another is being introduced to the poetry of Yeats. Ben Evans explains:

> Our new Trivium course is studied by all third form pupils in groups of ten for four lessons per week. Oundelians are intellectually ambitious but it is vital that they do not equate all learning with assessment. 'Triv' has no syllabus and no prescribed content.

Many of the Trivium themes will overlap, and this is important: appreciation of a work of art is enhanced by an understanding of historical context. What links all the sets in this course is the method of teaching – the Trivium's traditional three ways, an ancient and medieval system of education – of grammar, logic and rhetoric. Oundle provides a modern Trivium, but expects that these three disciplines will remain central to the teaching:

> Grammar: Pupils learn the basic facts of any subject – what its key words and ideas are. They develop a habit of *learning* first the core knowledge of a new subject, before moving on to discussing or disputing it.
>
> Logic: Pupils are given conflicting ideas and trained how to sort them out – to get to the truth of things. They develop a habit of *analysis and clarification* (not just argument), in order to deal with the raw material they learnt at the grammar stage. Importantly, logic is not opinion – proper opinions can only be formed after and as a result of directed discussion (*dialectic*). Silence is not an option.
>
> Rhetoric**:** Pupils take the distilled ideas from the first two stages and learn how to express this truth to others persuasively. They develop a habit of *art* – an act of forming a personal world view, but also an act of public service: revealing to others what truth you have learnt and discovered yourself.

Head of Trivium, William Gunson comments:

> The result of Trivium is an ability to learn facts, carefully unpick conflicts, and express the resulting truth in simple, elegant, persuasive terms. All humanities (and much science) can be approached via the three-part Trivium – course content is broad, giving wide teacher discretion.

Trivium lessons may take the form of seminars, combining grammar (teacher-given facts) with logic (dispute based on knowledge) through class discussion. Sets may be given pre-reading – *prep* in its original sense – to arrive with some of the grammar already learnt. Rhetoric comes next: essays, speeches and debates, often as more typical *prep*: consolidating after the lesson. Staff strike their own balance. For exceptional pupils, there will be a prestigious *viva voce* competition for the Trivium Prize. William Gunson adds, At the practical level, Trivium produces Oundelians ready to learn about a subject before offering an opinion on it. And, having acquired an opinion based on fact and careful discussion, an ability to express their view coherently to others.

> At the idealistic level, Trivium gives direction to a pupil's moral compass through a wide grounding in ideas across subject disciplines, training them in a habit of

Oundle symposium.

thinking through their views and actions, and an ability and duty to persuade others onto whatever more reasoned, virtuous course they find. Such habits, it is hoped, will lead to more reasoned lives, as Socrates' terms would put it, or more virtuous ones, in Oundle's Anglican terms.

The close relationship between the teacher and the pupils develops during the course of the year, with small set sizes allowing for the classroom atmosphere to be similar to that of a tutorial. The philosophy of the course can be summed up the words of E M Forster: only connect. Ben Evans observes:

> Oundle's GCSE results are exceptional. The raw results have placed us 30th in *The Times'* league table for the past two years. The Value Added per pupil has improved steadily for the last ten years whilst the academic ability of the average Oundelian has remained remarkably consistent.
>
> The evidence suggests that the results have reached a peak, and the new challenge is to maintain standards, especially against a backdrop of falling GCSE top grades nationwide. If we assume that we have reached a zenith in terms of teaching towards examinations, we should investigate further ways of improving the educational experience whilst still maintaining the rigour involved with preparing pupils for GCSE.
>
> We wish to sow seeds for the future by providing intellectual stimulation from the off. Our aim should be to create something akin to a 'colloquium for all'.

Third form pupil Emily Tarbatt (13) comments:

> Our set for Trivium have been studying the interesting life of Alan Turing looking at his fascinating maths background, breaking codes and how his discovery has helped and impacted on today's technology and mathematical advances.
>
> As well as this we have put together a quirky radio show for Oundle School's own radio station, OSCAR Radio – due to broadcast again on 87.9FM in April. The show is about bragging. Each pupil in my Trivium group researched different types of bragging, the history of bragging and the positives and negatives of bragging.
>
> For my own contribution to the show, I researched celebrity braggs, explaining how and why celebrities find themselves bragging and whether that be their intention. We recorded our show ready for November and have thoroughly enjoyed the process.
>
> I personally like the freedom of speech during the lessons and have found the topics that we are studying very interesting. I enjoy our Trivium classes because they are very intriguing and they get us to think about topics we probably wouldn't consider outside the classroom.
>
> In our classes we usually start with a pupil who has done some research for the lesson presenting their work in front of the class. Then everyone is invited to ask questions about the presentation followed by discussions and small debates on anything to do with our subject.

Back to the Future at Framlingham College

Looking forward with the sixth form

There was a palpable sense of excitement as Framlingham College students returned to school in September. They were coming back to a year of celebration for the College's 150th anniversary and to a school where the heart of the College had been transformed with the completion of the new Sixth Form Centre and whole-school café that had been built to mark this sesquicentenary.

The £2.7m project, which included the expansion of the College's boarding facilities in the space freed up by the new building, was the brainchild of the Headmaster, Paul Taylor.

The College has long been a very popular destination for those seeking to move to new pastures for the sixth form, regularly recruiting 30-40 new students each year to supplement those already coming through the College, and the new Sixth Form Centre will provide them with unparalleled facilities and resources. As the Headmaster explains:

> The 16 year-old of today is a very different beast from those of even ten years ago. They have a great sense of self and many feel ready for a more independent, 'adult' working environment. However, we believe firmly that they still require the pastoral and academic structures and support mechanisms that are offered by a school such as ours, and this building is about meeting them half way.

The Sixth Form Centre occupies the first floor of the stunning two-floor, glass-fronted extension to the main building, enjoying outstanding views of the surrounding countryside. There are expansive and varied working areas and enhanced careers and further education resources. These include a seminar room fully equipped with state-of-the-art conference facilities to allow the College's impressive careers programme to access the national and global network of careers specialists.

This infuses the College with an awareness of the world that their students will enter beyond school. Paul Taylor was very keen that the building remained in the heart of the school:

> We did not want to build a separate Sixth Form House or Centre at a tangent to the school. We want our sixth formers right in the heart of the College, providing leadership and inspiration for the younger members of the school. They set the tone for what is and what is not acceptable behaviour, and the values and standards for the younger ones to follow.

The new building is not just about the sixth form. There are four new classrooms and the ground floor sees an impressive café that has become a social hub for the whole school and, increasingly, the wider Framlingham community. The new building sits as an extension to the original school and, while it is strikingly modern, there is much exposed original brickwork in the interior of the building.

> This blend of the old with the new represents so much of what this school is about: change and continuity. The glass fronted façade reflects a forward-thinking, outward-looking and dynamic environment; while the exposed brickwork of the original building inside reminds us of our heritage and the traditional values that have underpinned the school since its foundation.
>
> In our anniversary year it is important to ensure that we remain true to our founding principles, but also that we continue to reinterpret those principles and apply them to the students of today and the world into which they will be graduating. In many ways, therefore, it is a case of Back to the Future.

This Suffolk boarding and day school, which was founded in memory of Prince Albert, one of the most visionary and progressive educational thinkers of his time, is in robust good shape and is clearly confident in its future. But new buildings are not the only way in which Framlingham's pupils are being catered for.

The College has established a partnership with SixthSense, a company that delivers proactive development programmes aimed at supporting the learning strategies, emotional growth and personal development of young people between the ages of 16 and 19.

The programme helps young people to identify their strengths, understand their learning preferences and what their particular challenges may be. It includes a 24-page personalized profile for each individual, a group workshop with students, a group workshop with teachers, follow-up one-to-ones with students, a support structure for teachers and pupils and a four month review.

Perry Trevers, partner at SixthSense, believes that the benefits for young people are far-reaching.

> Sixth form is probably the most challenging time in the life of young people. In addition to the stress of exams, older teenagers are having to make the emotional transition from child to adult. Insights can genuinely help with both. We help each young person to see and enjoy the difference between themselves and others, showing them that we are all different and that's all right.
>
> Having come from a commercial background myself, I am acutely aware of how effective Insights Discovery has been with adults and why business use of Insights Discovery profiling continues to grow. Commercial companies are always looking for the extra 5%; they are always looking to innovate. In Framlingham College, we found a progressive school that was looking to do the same thing.

Susan Wessels, senior deputy head at the College, said:

> The College is very excited about the relationship that we

are building with SixthSense and, after a very successful trial of the Insights profiles, we have decided to offer them to all our sixth form and associated staff.

The students and staff found the Insights profiles hugely beneficial as it has helped them to determine the best ways to approach their learning and teaching, understanding the ways in which they prefer to interact with others and they have used it as a consideration in deciding which higher education programmes would best suit them.

Overall it's something that the students and staff can use in all areas of life and has been seen as a fantastic personal development tool! With our new sixth form centre recently completed, the partnership with SixthSense gives our pupils every opportunity to develop their own potential in an adult learning environment.

Paul's Court and College Café.

Managing to Lead

John Weiner reminds those interviewing for leadership roles of the importance of management skills

Having sat in front of interview panels for senior roles in independent schools, there has always been a focus on leadership. Apart from the usual friendly interrogation itself, there have invariably been presentations broadly based around 'My vision for X'.

This is fair enough, isn't it? We want people at the business end of decision-making in our schools to be dynamic, creative thinkers, who have a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve. Of course we do, but perhaps we are overestimating this particular skill when choosing our future captains. What about the less attractive cousin of leadership – management?

The business theorist Peter Drucker distinguished the two as follows: 'Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.' But we cannot look at each of them in isolation because leadership and management are two sides of the same coin – an inspirational vision is no good if the leader lacks the skills to implement that vision or embedded school processes block change.

Similarly, of course, a strong manager with no clear overall end-objective is no good either, as they're unlikely to achieve very much of note (other than, probably, to make their remit work a little more smoothly). Nowadays, however, it is almost an insult to call someone a 'good manager', or it is at least a case of damning them with faint praise. It implies a pedestrian approach of bean-counting and processes, not inspiration and stimulation.

Strangely, this disparaging view is a relatively new phenomenon, as not so long ago the western world was in awe of Japanese management techniques pioneered by the likes of Toyota, and racing to emulate the new world leaders in efficiency. Techniques such as just-in-time production and total quality management were adopted to make the most of

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Joe McCann is UK champion in four Gaelic music disciplines

Felsted Music Scholar Joe McCann (14) is the All UK champion in no fewer than four Gaelic music disciplines – traditional Irish Fiddle (Slow Airs); Harmonica; Bodhran; and Traditional Singing. Playing 14 instruments in total, Joe has also achieved his ABRSM Grade 5 Piano.

These achievements are spectacular at such a young age and it is a strong testament to the Schools' focus on producing musical excellence that he has chosen to study at Felsted. This builds on last year's announcement of the School's partnership with Junior Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

"This is an incredible and extraordinary achievement. Joe has also come 8th in the World Championships which took place in Ireland. We are extremely proud of this exceptional musical accomplishment across so many instruments and at his age. I have no doubt he will go on to further extraordinary achievements," comments Headmaster Dr Mike Walker.

Joe comments: "I have regular private tutoring from the director of music at Limerick University, at his workshops in Hammersmith. Until a few years ago I was playing mostly classical music, then a friend and I went to a Gaelic music workshop and this inspired me to follow the Gaelic music style. I enjoy playing Gaelic music as I am proud of my Irish roots and this is a way of preserving the culture. I also hope to start a Gaelic music band."

the resources being put into the production process. Some of these techniques are of course focussed on the physical production of products, but others are directly relevant to independent schools today.

Take the theory of *Kaizen*, for example. This is the idea that organisations should be focussed around continuous improvement. As the months and years go by, all the little incremental enhancements lead to a far leaner organisation as a whole. The only way this can work is by allowing and encouraging those employees further down the food chain the authority and responsibility to change the way they do things.

Kaizen groups can be set up specifically for this purpose, where the leader's role is expressly to facilitate this process. *Kaizen* is clearly a management issue (doing things right), but once you look into it, it's not so different from the 'distributed leadership' theories that have been doing the rounds for some years in post-graduate leadership qualifications, in that it is about driving improvement through those who are best placed to drive it.

I am sure that we are all aware of areas in our own schools where things seem unnecessarily inefficient or burdensome, but who takes the responsibility to drive clearly needed change? It's not often perceived as an attractive task (although you do get the odd assistant head (administration) these days) and there is therefore a danger that these inefficiencies remain in the medium or long term. Systemic or management inefficiencies can consequently act as a brake on a school leader's ability to achieve their vision, and must be addressed if the leader wants to really make a difference.

It's also important not to underestimate the value that more effective management can bring to our pupils. Better teaching and learning outcomes can just as equally come from improvements in the way we do things as from inspirational leadership. For example, encouraging more effective sharing of best practice between academic departments through a focus on one area each term in heads of department meetings could be a management change that directly impacts the pupils in the classroom.

No-one would dispute the value of this, but its benefit would derive from a streamlining of the sharing process, rather than anything more fundamental. Little Jimmy, of course, wouldn't care one way or the other where it came from, but would be pleased that the great way they organised their geography folders was now being used in history.

Many independent schools have started to try to address the leader/manager problem in recent years with an expanded, two-tier SMT/SLT. The Head and deputies may often hold the more visionary roles, with their meetings focussed around big picture strategic issues. Assistant heads will pick up the more managerial side of things and be more directly responsible for the nuts and bolts running of things.

Whilst this is a move in the right direction, it is often very hard to extricate one from the other, particularly as many of the candidates for assistant head roles will be looking to move onwards and upwards and are keen to show what they can do in terms of leadership. You want a bit of leader and manager in all your senior staff if they are to maximise the school's potential and their own.

Crucial to creating an effective SMT is perhaps the most vital management skill of all: people management. I have written previously about the importance of engaging and involving all staff in schools and most agree that the ability to build trusting relationships to move a school forward together is fundamental. It is in this area that the management experience of an assistant headship can be most beneficial.

John Weiner

There are many examples of leaders with a clear vision, who may well have been right but were unable to bring the staff with them and achieve what they set out to do. Managing your staff effectively is certainly not an optional add-on to a leadership skills-set but a core requirement, and vital experience in building these management skills is inherent in becoming a successful leader later on.

Don't get me wrong. Vision is of vital importance at the top level of independent schools, but this must go alongside a renewed interest in management as well, when selecting future school leaders. Writing a hypothetical letter to an angry parent, labelled as an 'in-tray exercise' simply does not cut it these days if you really want to understand how effective someone is as a manager as well as a leader.

How about questions or tasks on logic and reasoning, such as the psychometric testing commonly used in industry? Or at the very least some specific questioning on management issues and process improvement? After all, if you don't have the implementation with the inspiration, you'll just end up with blurred vision.

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. He previously worked in the City and now authors The SMT Spy*, a blog on leadership in schools. (smtspy.blogspot.co.uk)*

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Changing the drum beat

Delyth Lynch describes the transformative effect of her sabbatical

When asked why I needed – or even wanted – to take a sabbatical, the analogy I came up with was that of the non-Duracell bunny. I had been running for what felt like a long time, determinedly climbing the ladder of promotion since I started teaching at the age of 21, and the batteries were beginning to slow.

The clarity of my personal and professional life was fading and the crunch decision to take the plunge came after the realisation that I simply wasn't leading staff at the level they deserved. Ultimately, I wondered if I was beginning to let down the most important people in the school – the pupils.

Wellington College changed its sabbatical guidance three years ago. Traditionally something reserved for teachers who had worked at the school for long periods of time and were approaching retirement, our finance director and governors decided to open up the process to anyone who had a proposal that would benefit the individual and the College.

I put pen to paper immediately and was delighted when it was approved. I wrote my bucket list and planned my professional development – to look at best practice in boarding and pastoral care in Australian schools, with a particular emphasis on wellbeing and positive education. I was deeply excited whilst also conscious of how privileged I was to have the opportunity to explore both professional and personal depths.

My work output increased before I even went away: the Michaelmas term was approached with a renewed vigour and that increased productivity in itself was affirming. Being organised was crucial to ensure that the pastoral life of the College ran smoothly in my absence. And that absence was the most phenomenal 3 ½ months of my life!

When I was 17, I vividly remember plucking up the courage to tell my parents that I would like to go inter-railing around Europe in my post A level summer holidays. Both looked at me in absolute horror and, in an almost rehearsed unison, said "no way"! My wanderlust had never been quelled and my lifelong ambition to travel in Australia and New Zealand was gnawing away at me.

And now? The bunny is back drumming! My mental focus and clarity is better than ever, as if life is being viewed through a different lens. I have learnt to act and not react and this has given me greater confidence to challenge myself and others professionally. I saw ideas in other schools that were innovative and exciting, some that I knew could be translated into Wellington College and others which were brilliant but undoubtedly better left to that organisation.

I learnt to be more discerning, with the feeling that time was being stretched out, allowing me, for the first time in ages, to simply think. I have maintained that since returning, learning to be more mindful and slowing things down a bit. The bunny

Wellington College Tianjin.

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is drumming strongly, but it is more of a paradiddle than a roll.

I also learnt some important lessons about resourcing: schools that did things well concentrated on one thing and put their resources into that. It made me realise that I had been spreading my resources, my time, and the staff I line-manage too thinly. My list of objectives for 2014/15 is shorter than ever and, for the first time, I think I will achieve everything on it!

I also discovered that good resources don't necessarily mean quality learning. I witnessed the poorest teaching I have ever seen in state of the art science centres and the dodgiest pastoral care in a boarding house that looked like a hotel. Work with what you've got and look at the untapped potential in buildings and staff: capture their imagination and use yours.

"What day is it?" asked Pooh. "It's today", squeaked Piglet. "My favourite day," said Pooh. I often told friends and family that I lived for the moment, but I didn't really. I worried about the past, I worried about the future. I worried about what I was doing at that moment: was it good enough? Was someone going to complain? What did people think?

Whilst away I did some amazing things, things that I had only ever dreamed of doing, and slowly but surely it began to dawn on me that I was so happy because I was living in the present and relishing every minute. And, key to my happiness was that I was in control: I was acting and not reacting. The acid test was how I could translate this into my work as a pastoral deputy on my return.

I have and you can. Working more efficiently than ever before, I am appreciating everything. We can't be in control of what happens to us, but we can control our response. Don't ask *why*, but *why not*! I feel more measured and balanced and as a consequence I am enjoying work more than I ever have.

I've always had a love of the outdoors, of vast space and nature. Time looking at phenomenal sights in Australia and New Zealand re-ignited my gratitude for my surroundings and on my return to the UK I realised that there was amazing natural beauty all around me that I had stopped being aware of: the sun setting and rising in Swinley Forest when I'm out running; the dawn chorus in my back garden; the rainbow over Mytchett Lake when swimming. Now I stop and look and listen.

Most importantly, however, my sabbatical enabled me to realise that to be effective in my role I needed to re-connect with the very individuals who influenced me to enter and stay in this profession – the young people. Senior leaders can become divorced from the pupils and the staff that they work with for a variety of different reasons, and I realised I had. Time spent in front of a computer writing policies or producing rotas had drawn me away from the thing I loved the most – interacting with children.

I have realigned my priorities for next year already, teaching wellbeing to 120 pupils rather than biology to 40. I eat my lunch with the pupils in the dining hall or our college café every day. I even dream of moving the SLT at Wellington out of the old toilet block around the back of the College which it currently inhabits and into the heart of the school – what a powerful statement that would be.

Delyth Lynch in the outback.

I always knew I worked with talented and committed colleagues, but knowing how hard they were working in my absence had a profound effect on me. I used to have a reluctance to work in the holidays because 'no one else is'. But while I was away I felt honour-bound to squeeze every second out of every day in every possible way. I read voraciously, travelled during the night and planned ahead. I learnt more in 3 ½ months than I think I ever have and I am profoundly grateful to the colleagues who made that possible.

The bonus is that they gained new experiences too: leading a school through a full ISI inspection; dealing with significant pastoral matters; chairing meetings; and thinking proactively about the College policies and procedures. Two have subsequently taken up senior leadership posts and they do so knowing that they have already had some experience of what is to come.

I have no doubt that I will look back in 40 years time and still maintain that my sabbatical was the single most defining moment in my career and personal life. I would encourage all schools to think about such an initiative. It will enable them to attract and retain quality staff, whilst increasing their job satisfaction and productivity. I am, quite simply, happier. I have returned to my job with unparalleled energy and commitment, with new skills and heightened awareness of the bigger picture. I am smiling outwardly and inwardly and it's a great feeling.

Delyth Lynch is deputy head (pastoral & wellbeing) at Wellington College.

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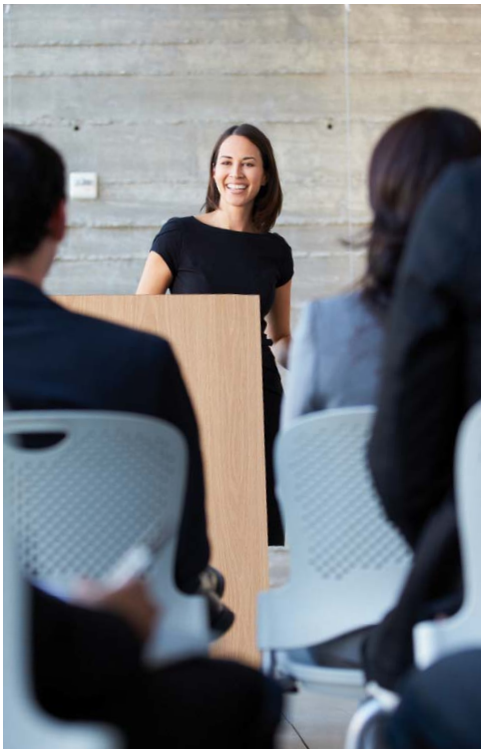

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Are teachers saving enough for retirement?

A recent survey suggests not

It's only once they're approaching retirement that many teachers realise they haven't given enough thought to their financial futures. Most teachers are looking forward to their retirement, when they'll have more time to see the grandchildren, take up a new hobby or embark on a long overdue around-the-world trip. But, according to the results of a survey conducted by savings, investments and insurance provider Teachers Assurance, financial planning for retirement is something a substantial number of teachers are neglecting.

The survey, carried out in association with independent research specialist Opinion Matters, questioned teachers who had either already retired or were within five years of retiring. It found that many hadn't given sufficient thought to their future finances, realising far too late that they hadn't saved enough money to afford the lifestyle they wanted in retirement.

It's no secret that the sooner you start saving, the more you'll have in the future. However, a worrying 10% of the teachers questioned admitted that they hadn't saved a penny for retirement. In addition, despite the fact that more than a third of respondents stated they'd saved for their retirement for between 31 and 40 years, 16% said they didn't think they'd have enough money to cover their financial requirements in later life.

But it's not all bad news. In comparison to a similar survey conducted by Teachers Assurance in 2013, the number of teachers who stated they currently paid into the Teachers' Pension Scheme had increased from 57% in 2013 to 67% this year and some did appear to be giving thought to how they were going to supplement their retirement income.

For example, 46% of respondents said they planned to save for retirement for 31 years or more and nearly half said they were saving between £50 and £200 in addition to their public sector pension each month. Other measures included being more careful with their money and changing their expectations.

Surprisingly, 80% of teachers wouldn't consider deferring their retirement in order to increase their income, preferring instead to return to work following their retirement. A huge 94% of respondents said they would consider returning to work, with 88% stating they would do so on a part-time basis and 6% saying they'd consider going back to full time work. In 2013, the same survey found that just 60% of teachers would consider a return to part time or full time work in order to gain additional income – showing an increase of more than a third.

Sam Richardson, head of membership services at Teachers Assurance comments:

> It's extremely worrying to learn that the vast majority of teachers feel they have no option but to return to work after they've retired. All of the teachers we spoke to were either retired or within five years of retiring, which indicates that people are leaving their retirement planning until it's far too late. We know that teachers work extremely hard throughout their career and believe they should be able to enjoy their retirement living, which is why it's so important they start thinking about future finances sooner rather than later.

Was this in the plan?

Unless more thought is put into retirement planning, things are unlikely to get any better. 87% of the teachers questioned believed future generations would be worse off in retirement and 61% thought employers or the government would reduce pension contributions and benefits within the next ten years. And although 57% of teachers stated they felt very happy about retiring, 36% said they felt slightly daunted about retiring, with 30% admitting to being worried about the financial aspects of retirement. With a slight increase of 2% since 2013, this figure demonstrates that changing economic climates and uncertainty within the profession are continuing to contribute to increased financial worries. Saving money earlier could help to combat these concerns.

It goes without saying that retirement planning isn't the most compelling of tasks! It can be hard to find the motivation to sit down and dedicate the time to planning your finances for the future. But, as the results of the survey show, it's important that teachers start preparing sooner rather than later in order to achieve the type of retirement they want. Thinking about the kind of life you would like to lead in retirement now will allow more time for you to identify any additional money you may need to save for the future.

The respondents of the Teachers Assurance survey described a number of ways in which they wanted to spend their pension lump sum. 29% said they would spend the money on holidays, 31% would use it to pay off their mortgage and 8% planned to buy themselves a present. Having goals of this sort in mind when thinking about your future finances could help to make retirement planning more interesting and motivate you to save more.

Teachers Assurance is a friendly society that has worked for the benefit of teachers, rather than shareholders, for more than 135 years. As experts in understanding and interpreting the Teachers' Pension Scheme, the company offers a free-of-charge retirement planning programme to help teachers plan for the retirement they want. More information is available on www.teachersassurance.co.uk

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in the first instance about books for review

Cat Scutt

Classroom in the Cloud

Cat Scutt appreciates the call to move sure-footedly into the 'discomfort' zone

The title of *Classroom in the Cloud*, according to the author Alex McGrath (Head of King's Ely Senior School), is designed to evoke thoughts 'of something ethereal which is not yet tangible … about dreaming … [and] the new phenomenon in computing which is affecting all of us: cloud technology.'

The ethereal, the dream that he references, is a new model of education based on blended or online learning and offering significant opportunities and choices for schools, teachers, parents and students alike; all built, of course, on the power of new technologies – and in particular the cloud computing and mobile revolution that moves learning away from the bricks and mortar classroom and out into the world.

Underpinned throughout by references to the all-too-familiar stories of Kodak, Blockbuster and Borders and the way in which those companies found themselves wrong-footed by the advance of innovative, technology-savvy newcomers, the book is both a rallying cry and a warning siren.

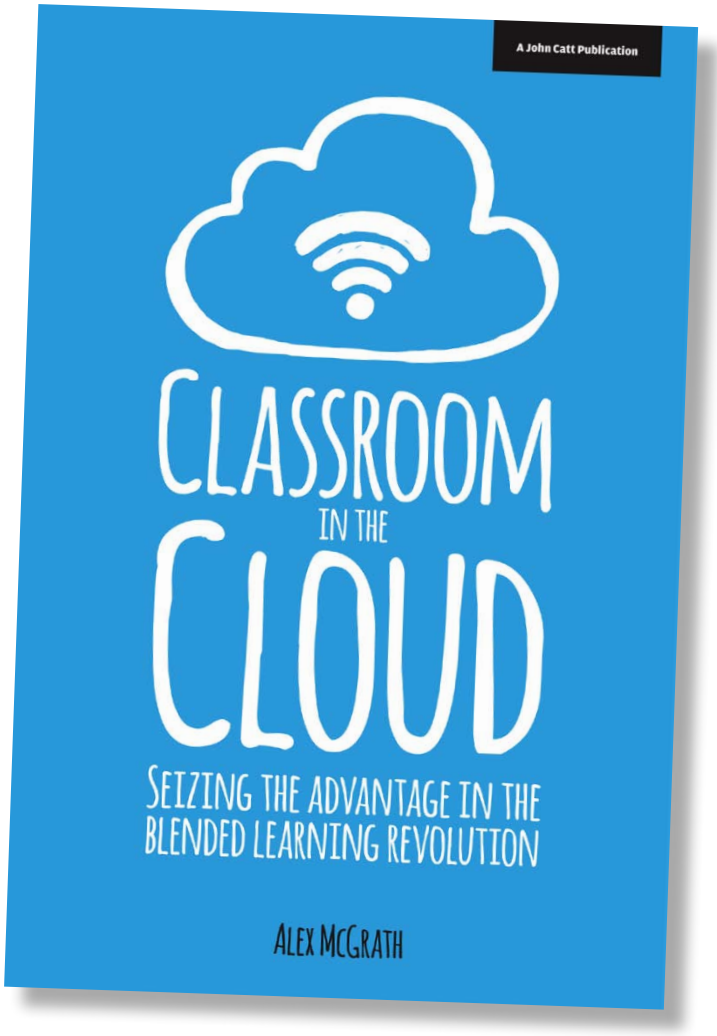
Those already interested in exploiting the possibilities afforded by blended learning in their organisation will finish the book equipped with both an increased desire to start the process and a very concrete sense of how to do so, but it is perhaps an even more important read for those who pick it up with either disinterest or opposition.

McGrath does not, however, underestimate the dilemma faced by our most successful schools – built on centuries of tradition – in deciding whether to move outside their comfort zone by starting to introduce blended or online learning (he calls this the 'incumbent's dilemma', referencing the work of Henry C Lucas Jr).

Nevertheless by bringing sharply into focus the increasing competition that may be faced by UK independent schools from both schools around the world and new, innovative UK-based online and blended schools under a new technology-enabled regime, he presents a cogent argument for the need to do so.

Drawing on research and case-studies from around the globe, but in particular from the USA and UAE (two regions where blended and online learning are becoming increasingly prevalent at high school level – McGrath references a study that suggests that by 2019 over half of US high school students will be studying online), the book explores the wide range of forms which blended learning can and does take, as well as the implications these have for both the independent and maintained sector in the UK.

Continued overleaf →



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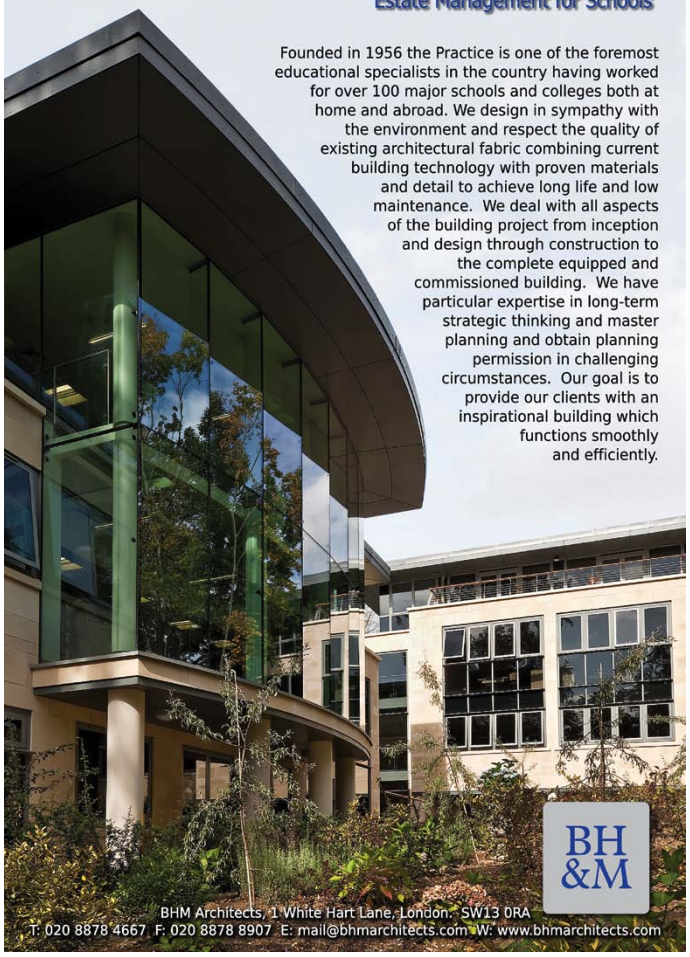

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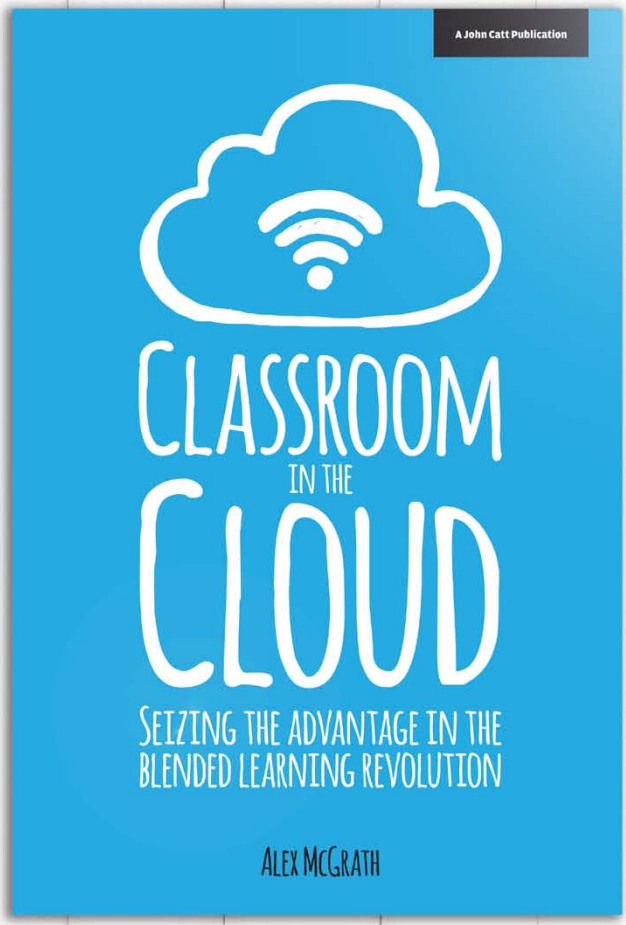

Classroom in the Cloud

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 by John Catt Educational Ltd.
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That *Classroom in the Cloud* manages to be simultaneously personal and wide-ranging, political and practical, technical and pedagogical, is on the one hand one of its strengths, but does on the other hand tend to lead to a feeling of disjointedness at times. Some notions feel a little underdeveloped or overly simplistic.

There is, for example, an implication that merely enabling students to learn at their own pace is 'personalisation', with a strong focus on the possibilities of extending learning for the most capable students but little mention of those who might need more support.

Likewise, the early suggestion that blended learning will naturally enable increased ratios of students to teachers gives little recognition of the significant time associated with developing and maintaining high quality online resources, moderating discussion and providing useful feedback.

McGrath does, however, temper this somewhat with a later acknowledgement that we may, rather than reducing the number of teachers, look to redeploy them to ensure that the pastoral and the co-curricular offer are enhanced in this new blended learning environment. In any case, these gaps are understandable in what is, after all, a relatively short and thoroughly readable book.

Overall, *Classroom in the Cloud* acts as a convincing and thought-provoking vision of the not-too-distant future, and leaves just one final question: whether its call to arms goes far enough. Should we not simply be seeking to embrace disruption as we ride on the wave of new technologies and play catch-up with our American counterparts, but actually looking to drive it?

As McGrath himself notes, it was a Kodak engineer who first developed a digital camera – but the perceived threat to their own main business of camera film meant that it wasn't pursued. Our opportunity as educationalists, then, and indeed our challenge, is first to disrupt, and then to embrace this disruption.

A former English teacher, Cat Scutt is now head of creative teaching and learning at the Girls' Day School Trust.

Classroom in the Cloud by Alex McGrath is published by John Catt Educational Ltd; 136pp, price £12.99, ISBN 9781909717190.

Quick wit

Christopher Martin ponders education upside down

If we could establish our education system now from scratch, would we reinvent what we have? Certainly not. Given that children's brains are at their most perceptive and retentive in their early years, surely we would want to pour resources into the first years of primary schooling, reducing class size to a dozen at most, encouraging any expression of interest shown by any child in any topic, prizing open further the range of interests into which their latent curiosity leads them and from which invariably would come recognition in all young people that reading and learning are the keys to enjoyment, let alone to a role in society.

Once a lust for learning had been kindled, certain core subjects could be introduced, provided these did not risk extinguishing the initial areas of fascination. The role of secondary schools would then be to extend existing interests, to promote collaborative work methods and to act as resources for social enterprise. The objective would be the formation of a generation of literate and numerate citizens with a respect for learning and a wish to contribute to society, or, in a word, to be useful.

The case for the reversal of the roles of grade school, high school and college was made most pungently by Art Buchwald nearly half a century ago:

> Six-year-olds are not ready for grade school. Let them have their first taste of school in college, where they can play games, frolic on campus and have panty raids in the dorms. College is not the place for serious work but it's the perfect place for children up to age nine to have a good time. After four years of college, a child is ready for high school, where he would have to get down to work. Not too

Christopher Martin

much, but enough to convince him that life is not a bowl of cherries.

He'd learn that there were only so many open places at grade school and that he therefore had to make the grades to qualify. Finally, he would face life in the tough world of grade school. Teachers there don't take back talk from students, social life is at a minimum. It's an eight year grind with no excuses for failure. No one drops out of grade school.

When all's said and done, it is the Mystery of Development that far outweighs in importance the exigencies of any curriculum. What exactly is taught probably matters less and less, as long as it is taught by people who are deeply enthused by their subject and who have the charisma and empathy with others to be able to put it across compellingly. Knowledge expands exponentially and with it, so do syllabuses. Educationists are always planting, but never weeding.

Schools' customers

You'd think, wouldn't you, that parents would be prepared to shoulder their share of the responsibility for their child's development, but increasing numbers seem reluctant to do so. They prefer to slope shoulders and look to the school to compensate for their and society's failings. Are they increasingly frightened by their children, or does their diminishing confidence in their ability to raise them come from an increasing assumption that only professionals know best?

Most school staff rooms have files of the most outrageous examples of parental failings, such as, 'You do not treat my son right. He needs 100% bollockings all the time.' This from a parent in West Yorkshire. Or a letter from the parent of a Year 7 pupil at a Bradford Middle School: 'Dear Miss P, Daniel was off school on Friday because he did not feel like coming, so he said bugger it I'll have the day off.' Or even a note received at a school in Worcester: 'John will be writing his own sick notes in future unless I think he's really ill.'

Pupils themselves come in all shapes and sizes of course, some of them startlingly so, at least if Woody Allen is to be believed:

"How many kids have you got?"

"Three."

"Oh, good. One of each."

One outspoken commentator did not hide his feelings behind more familiar euphemisms:

> All things considered, I would rather have children who are mild, obedient and good than the nervous, twisting, wistful, pathetic, centreless children we are cursed with: or the fat and self-satisfied sheep-in-the-pasture children who are becoming more common: or the impudent, I'm-as-good-as-anybody smirking children who are far too numerous.

Thus writes D H Lawrence in his essay *Education of the People*. He has more in common than he would like to admit with Comrade Yagodin, chairman of the Soviet Education Committee in 1988:

> We treat children like nails. Every time one stands out further than the rest, we give it a good hammering until it becomes the same height as the others.

One of the largest students to be submitted to the indignity of grading may have been Moose, at one time the star of the Syracuse basketball team. At the end of his first semester, his tutor gave him four grades, F F F (as in Fail) and D (as in a narrow pass.) "What do you think of that, Moose?" to which Moose, after due consideration, replied, "I've concentrated too hard on one subject."

When their charges show intelligence on a scale higher than that of their teachers, we can either panic or rejoice. We would never have heard of Albert Camus if his teacher had not recognised that his pupil was touched by genius and encouraged him out of the grinding poverty into which he had been born. His autobiographical novel *The First Man*, published posthumously, is a hymn to the invaluable role of sharp-eyed empathetic teachers.

Understandably, many of us teachers become increasingly aware over the course of our career, often with envy, of the widening age gap between us and our charges. 'Too clever by half' is a bizarre thought to employ as a criticism of a young person and possibly only exists in English. Elsewhere, giftedness is not viewed with such suspicion. Given society's need for all the very clever people we can produce, and given also the microcosmic parts of our brain capacity that we actually put to use, it's the other hidden part of our 'cleverness' that we need to ginger up.

Christopher Martin was Headmaster of Bristol Cathedral School and Millfield.

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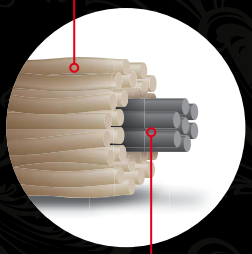

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