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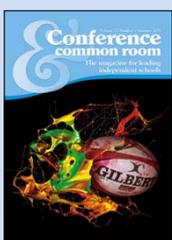
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# Stevensons

SCHOOL UNIFORM | SPORTSWEAR | SPORTS EQUIPMENT

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*David Lund's exploding photographs.*  
See page 27.

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Michael Cockerell's four television programmes *Inside the Commons* revealed two striking similarities with old fashioned Public Schools: crumbling Victorian buildings whose maintenance had been long neglected, magnificent on the outside but disintegrating within and, crucially, below; and moments of behaviour *en masse* reminiscent of a pack of hounds at the kill or a group of adolescent boys tormenting an inadequate master.

Other familiar features included ritual shouts resonant to anyone who has encountered the fagging system; solemn and somewhat ridiculous set-pieces based on historical precedents; 'bagging' of seats; special language; confusing corridors and contradictory staircases; lost and uncertain 'newbugs'; and kindly – and not so kindly – staff who have seen more MPs come and go over the years than they can remember.

Fixed term parliaments lead to fixed term elections, which occur after five years – a terminal exam of its kind with make or break consequences for the candidates every bit as significant as A levels. There is even a robust form of House spirit despite the genetic imperative to contradict and oppose required by the party system and endorsed by the layout of the chamber.

There are swots and wags, prefects and novices and a fine new extension which is already over-crowded. Before we know it, an appeal will be launched to save the Palace of Westminster, whilst MPs salaries are not unlike bursaries, enabling people of ordinary means to attend this costly and elite institution which would otherwise be an enclave of the rich.

But is this association of politics and education not rather far-fetched? Would that it were! Politicians tinker with education with all the obsessive compulsion of a trichotillomaniac, although it is teachers who find themselves tearing their hair out in frustration at the never-ending changes imposed upon them and their pupils by Whitehall and Westminster. Meanwhile, politicians are classified by the schools they went to and, as a matter of policy, local authorities are increasingly excluded from involvement in the schools attended by the children of the people they represent.

The adversarial system of the Commons is neither sufficient to temper the conviction politics of government ministers nor to promote wise consensus. Schools are meant to promote social values, amongst other things, but a willingness to listen to other points of view or tolerate other ways of doing things are not characteristics of the present political scene.

Only 44% of the age group 18-24 voted at the 2010 General Election, compared with more than 75% of people aged 65 and over, in an overall turnout of 65.1%. In the Scottish referendum there was an 84.6% overall turnout, including 68% of those aged 16-24. The turnout percentages for the General Election this May will make interesting reading, especially the figures for the youngest age group. This lack of political urgency may be a natural defence against the apparently endless bad news cycles we currently endure. Wars and rumours of war, austerity and financial instability, global warming and invasive corporate globalisation combine to create an atmosphere conducive to pessimism.

Fortunately, those who work in schools are constantly reinvigorated by the irrepressible buoyancy of their pupils, whose optimism is matched by their talent. The next generation of scientists already shows a much improved gender balance and the same is beginning to be true in engineering. As our society becomes more multi-cultural, schools also continue to develop local and global links. Internal

## Editorial

and external communications are improved by carrier use of technology and it is becoming commonplace for reports to be delivered to parents on line.

One of the greatest beneficiaries of modern technology is our understanding and knowledge of the recent and more distant past. The inevitable current focus on The First World War is made sharper and more intense by the resources available on line and the ease with which those resources can be shared and commented upon. In the same way, the continuing saga of the discovery and reburial of the body of King Richard III owes everything to modern technology and to the expertise with which modern researchers can decipher and interpret information. It may be that it would have been better for all of us if Pandora's box had never been opened, but now that it has, some of the contents are fascinating.

Pupils are not the only ones thinking more globally. As Ian Hunt points out, British education is sought after worldwide, so much so that schools in the UK may face a staff recruitment crisis. The names of well established leading schools are to be found in the Near and Far East with increasing frequency, associated with new foundations in a variety of ways.

Meanwhile, students from outside the UK continue to join our schools in significant numbers, seeking and finding an education still regarded as world class despite the fidgeting of ministers. Those who are perhaps most challenged in maintaining these high standards are school leaders. As Chris Muller observes, it is depressing that so many potential candidates for Headship shy away from the challenge. It must be admitted that the pressures are more and more intense in both the independent and the maintained sector.

The 'football manager' syndrome, identified by ASCL's General Secretary, Brian Lightman, is one. With nearly 150 heads leaving or being forced out of their jobs between September and December 2013, and with clear evidence that ASCL members are increasingly unwilling to take on leadership roles in challenging schools, it seems that the current emphasis on accountability may well have become damaging and counter-productive.

John Greenacre's teaching career, described within, is unlikely to be repeated and Hogwarts is, of course, only the latest school to star in the fictional firmament described by Dr Cathy Taylor, but schools continue to serve their communities and their pupils well. The leading citizens of Manchester who founded Withington Girls' School, or the Headmistresses who met at the home of Miss Buss in December 1872, would still recognise their schools and would still applaud their achievement. And the founder of Eton College would no doubt be pleased to know that the school's current Headmaster was a chorister there, under the provision set up and endowed in King Henry's Foundation Charter of 1440.

## HERE & THERE



### If you're good enough you're old enough

An aspiring young Trent College musician is proving the old adage if you're good enough you're old enough after stepping into the breach to play the organ at Derby Cathedral after the cathedral's professional assistant organist broke his arm.

Trent College sixth form and Derby Cathedral Organ Scholar Matthew Gibson, 17, has assumed extra responsibilities as regular organist, Tom Corfield, recovers from his injury.

Matthew found himself preparing music to accompany the choir and congregation at short notice, taking it all in his stride, as the editor can testify, having heard him accompanying Evensong. He also proved an invaluable guide to other organists who helped out, including the cathedral's new director of music.

Steven Henderson, director of music at Trent College, explains: "This opportunity is a testament to Matthew's hard work and commitment. As a school it is fantastic to be able to support and allow accomplished musicians to flourish in this way and pursue these sorts of opportunities.

"Matthew is passionate about succeeding as a musician. He can be found practising in the Trent College Chapel before 6am every morning and has already taken the initiative to meet and play for several prominent organists and directors of music throughout the country as he prepares to take the next step."

During the Christmas period, Matthew played at Westminster Abbey as part of Derby Cathedral Choir's visit.

# Speak up!

John Weiner argues that a good school needs councillors as well as counsellors

If you asked a random pupil in your school to name three things that the student council had achieved, could they? Over my career, I'm not sure I would be confident that my pupils always could, despite the fact that I know my current and previous schools have all taken Student Voice very seriously. So how effective are we in independent schools in fully involving students in the decision-making process and what can we do to improve?

Although we often use the phrase 'Student Voice', student involvement should be about much more than a council of pupils offering an opinion on the choice of colour of the boys' toilets. It is about engaging all of our pupils in developing the processes and structures that shape their learning, changing them from passive receivers of education to active participants in schools.

Now there will already be some alarm bells ringing, but please rest assured that I am talking about an ongoing partnership with our key stakeholders here, which is very different from pupils 'taking over' the school. After all, I think that most people would agree that our pupils are fairly well placed to highlight what a school does well and, of course, what it doesn't. This can and should include involvement in a wide range of areas.

For example, does your school have trained 'student observers' who can give a different perspective on a lesson observation? Do all departments seek regular feedback from the students they teach? Are pupils included in parts of meetings where they can give some valuable input, such as Heads of Year meetings or even certain discussions within SMT? In this article, however, I would like to focus on Stage 1 of the process, namely Student Voice itself. Can we hear what the pupil body is saying?

Have you ever heard a colleague bemoan student apathy towards school councils? I have – but imagine this situation. Freddy and some of his peers are nominated to be on the council by their form tutors. They're all lovely kids and are happy to help out. Meetings are scheduled for a lunchtime, once a half term. For the first meeting, two have music practice, one forgets and the remainder come along with interest, despite the occasional envious glance out the window at their friends enjoying their break.

They are asked for their feedback on the new tartan uniform, which they duly give ("please don't make us wear this"). The staff member also queries if there is anything they want to raise. They're not sure what is bothering the younger students, but Freddy mentions that the printer in the sixth form centre is always in use at break and could a second one be installed to ease the pressure?

Two months later the new tartan uniform is unveiled, although the staff member assures the council that their views were taken on board. The printer issue was referred to the head of sixth form, who says it was not budgeted for this



John Weiner

year, but will be put in next year's budget, so should be here by 2017, if approved. Freddy will have left by then, but is considering asking for it to be named in his honour, to reflect his achievement. Is there any wonder that some students are not full believers in the system?

OK – I admit that's a bit over the top and I'm glad to say all of my schools have done a much better job than that! However, it does highlight the vital conditions required for effective Student Voice, namely:

As many students as possible must have the opportunity to get involved.

Students must be able to debate their own agenda.

Students must have some power to act as well as talk.

Timely feedback and explanation for decisions must be given.

So what might this look like in independent schools today?

## Who?

Well there's no harm in having a council-type body as a part of the process, but it must be drawn from each of the year groups and be as representative as possible. Elections are of course not perfect, but this process would allow everyone to have their say and ballot papers could have a 'Things that need changing' section to combine the election with obtaining real feedback on issues that matter to our pupils. With electronic systems so simple to set up, this could very easily be collated effectively. Hustings will also help to drum up support and interest.

## What?

It is important to cast the net as wide as possible to prevent a few pupils dominating matters with their own individual beefs. The first agenda could be set by the council based on the matters raised by the election questionnaire. Whilst there is a danger of survey overload if students are asked repeatedly, once the system is up and running, the higher profile may

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mean more issues are brought forward organically, once some results are achieved.

### When?

An open forum to debate the agenda set by the council is vital in ensuring that action points created are truly representative of the pupil body. All pupils should have the opportunity to comment on the points raised and offer potential solutions where possible. From a practical viewpoint, focusing on year groups may be a more effective way to elicit contributions from students than trying to do the whole school in one go, as the younger pupils may be reticent to contribute fully in a potentially intimidating whole school environment.

That said, I have seen the whole school model work very effectively in a Quaker school, helped, of course, by the culture of democracy and tolerance which underpins such institutions. Devoting some year group assembly time to this is also likely to be helpful, as a lunchtime session will not encourage a strong turnout with so much else going on. If we take Student Voice seriously, we can surely spare some 'official' time.

### What then?

Many issues (eg suggested rule changes) will need discussion by the relevant staff/SMT. It is important to note that the

answer may not always be 'yes', but that the relevant member of staff must feed back to the council and year groups as to the reasons why a particular decision was taken. That said, my view would be for the school to start from the viewpoint of 'yes' as the default, with a 'no' requiring strong reasons. Other issues may be more minor, such as Freddy's printer. Awarding the council a budget would empower pupils to take swift action on smaller issues, allowing for quick wins for all concerned.

Student Voice is an area that has so much potential to be a power for good in schools, not only in solving issues, but also in building engagement, leadership and ownership of the school's performance amongst pupils. It also has a direct benefit on all the school's stakeholders and can promote more positive working relationships between staff and pupils as a whole. Apart from anything else, I think most of us would agree that we're beyond the era of children being seen but not heard! But don't take my word for it – why not ask the pupils?

*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 co-authors The SMT Spy, a blog on leadership in schools. ([smtspy.blogspot.co.uk](http://smtspy.blogspot.co.uk)).*

# Through the looking glass

Discovering how students view learning and school is the key to developing their academic potential, says Matthew Savage

With a diverse mix of cultures, customs and languages enriching our daily school life, one of an international school's biggest strengths is celebrating difference amongst our students. Like all schools that welcome students from around the globe, our goal remains the same no matter the nationality or languages spoken – we want all children to progress to the best of their ability during their time with us.

It's key to our success that every child feels that each lesson has been designed specifically to meet their needs. We call this approach The Mona Lisa Effect, in homage to the way you feel Mona Lisa's eyes look only at you when you walk past. However, when you are teaching a modified version of the English National Curriculum to a cohort who can have wildly different levels of English language acquisition, this strategy needs careful planning.

We start by doing everything we can to understand our students and to see life and learning here through their eyes.

### Enhancing teacher judgement

In an international school like ours, we need to be hyper-aware of cultural nuances that have the potential to mask signals teachers would otherwise pick up. With children from Thailand, for example, there can be a strong degree of cultural diffidence and deference to the teaching profession. This can lead to reluctance in some pupils to question teachers

if they do not understand something, which is not ideal for accelerating learning.

To mitigate this and glean a deeper understanding of our pupils, we pair teacher judgement with a number of other assessment tools. One of the tools we use to identify students' individual strengths, weaknesses and learning styles is cognitive abilities testing. The results provide us with a picture of a student's capabilities so that we can set realistic but challenging targets, monitor progression and help them to learn in the way that works best for them.

### Attitudes are key

As a complement to the cognitive abilities data, we carry out the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) survey across the whole school. This attitudinal survey from GL Education looks at nine attitudinal factors, from a student's feelings about school to how they perceive their own learning ability. Research behind the survey has shown that if a child does not feel confident and happy about school, it greatly affects their ability to progress academically.

It can be incredibly difficult to see through the mask of 'teenagehood', particularly given the range of cultural backgrounds at our school, but this assessment offered a way through. By uncovering any issues we hoped to be able to identify and address any underlying concerns, so that a child

## Listening and talking

was free to maximise their academic progress. Without doubt, the results of this survey have been an eye-opener to us all.

### Building confidence and ambition

To begin with, we discovered that students' natural deference to authority was far more deeply entrenched than we had realised, with students taking the view that teachers are superior and learners are inferior.

Such a stance can be quite detrimental to learning – students can become averse to taking risks because they are over concerned about getting something wrong and, also, reluctant to challenge or enter into debates with their teachers.

To counteract this hierarchical structure, we are, for example, transforming the Student Voice programme we run in the school to encourage students to be more outspoken and openly opinionated, and not to accept everything they are told at face value. We hope this will alter the way students see themselves and give them the freedom to ask questions and to challenge the 'system', eventually helping them to develop into more bold, confident and ambitious individuals.

### Overcoming obstacles

As an international school with fewer than 10% native English speaking children, we already had an awareness that a lack of confidence in their English ability could conceivably hinder

even our most able students. As it turned out, the survey revealed that many of these students had a low opinion of their perceived learning capabilities and, as a result, worryingly poor self-regard.

Examining these findings in conjunction with the cognitive abilities test results showed us that some of our very able students do not actually consider themselves able at all, because they are making false assumptions about the correlation between their grasp of English and their cognitive abilities.

In fact, this phenomenon proved to be so extensive that we have dramatically intensified our English as an additional language (EAL) programme, including for our 'invisible' EAL learners, in order to reduce the impact of poor language proficiency on our students' attainment.

### Securing success

It's no exaggeration to say that the attitudinal survey in particular has been one of the most exciting educational discoveries I have shared. Being able to glean such useful insights from the student surveys has meant that we are all looking much more closely at the attitudes and progress of individual students, and this has sparked some very worthwhile conversations that we would not have otherwise had.

Our next step is to explore the ownership of this data and to

*The student's view.*





*Learning through their eyes.*

determine to what extent we should share it with students and parents. I believe that the more students understand their own data profile, the more they should be able to navigate and steer their own learning journey – and with such autonomy has to come happier and more successful students. It is certainly an interesting road ahead.

I asked James Neil of GL Education for a brief overview of how to use assessment to build a comprehensive profile for each child, with a view to removing potential learning obstacles from their path. He writes:

Personalised learning – to the extent every child feels as though the lesson has been designed especially for them – clearly has extremely positive repercussions for progress and achievement. Here are my tips if you'd like to use assessments to discover individual students' potential and remove any barriers in their way:

**Get all levels of management on board.** Make sure the senior leadership team are involved in decisions about how assessment data will be used. You'll then have the backing you need to implement interventions when issues are identified.

**Decide what data you need and identify a baseline.** Bring in some form of cognitive abilities testing to identify the developed abilities of your students. From this you might see that the quiet, bright boy getting on

with things at the back of the class actually has huge untapped potential, or that the EAL girl you thought was disinterested would make much better progress with some language proficiency intervention.

**Feed the data into lesson plans.** For example, once you know you have a cohort with a large number of spatial learners, you can take a more visual approach in lessons with images, charts and diagrams.

**Explore attitudes to learning.** A child can appear cheerful in class and score well in a cognitive abilities test, but if their self-confidence is waning, it's only a matter of time before they stop feeling motivated to achieve. Use an attitudinal survey to help you understand how students see themselves as learners.

**Involve students and parents.** Working together cannot be underestimated, so share information to break down any barriers to learning and improve progress

*James Neil is international director at GL Education, having previously taught secondary science and physics in schools in the UK and overseas.*

*Matthew Savage is deputy headmaster at Bromsgrove International School Thailand and may be found on twitter @savageeducation*

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# Making the most of modern communications media

Frank Butt describes why Langley School has overhauled pupil reporting as part of a wider drive to give parents more valuable information about their child's learning progress

In a competitive world, even the best schools cannot afford to rest on their laurels and Langley School is constantly looking at ways to raise the bar. Above all, we want to encourage and support each of our 500 senior and 200 prep and nursery pupils to do the best they can. This means making sure parents have the information they need to support their child in making the best possible progress.

We are a forward-looking school that values children's strengths and individual characters. So we set out to find a digital age solution to improve how and what we were communicating with parents.

## Revolutionising the school report

One of the most effective ways to help pupils fulfil their potential is to ensure that their parents are involved in their education. These days, parents want more from the school report than simply 'could do better'. Imprecise or, at worst, critical comments are not helpful. What parents need to support their child is clear information that focuses on encouraging progress.

This was the thinking behind our decision to change the format of our parental reporting. The first step was to initiate a move away from the traditional paper-based school report and to bring in electronic reporting. This freed us to make some radical changes to the way reports are written.

There is always a risk that the task of reporting to parents becomes a box-ticking exercise, resulting in wordy reports that fill a page without saying anything really useful. As part of our electronic reporting format, we now give teachers only 200 characters for each entry, so they have to consider very carefully the main points they want to convey. By making every word count, the report entries have a much sharper focus. This gives both parents and pupils a more valuable document to help guide children towards their learning goals.

## Looking ahead

Similarly, a pupil report that dwells too much on the past is not a good way to encourage a child to raise their performance. We have found that it is far better to stay focused on the future. Each entry in our reports, therefore, contains a positive

comment on a child's progress as well as an effort-based target to aim for in the coming term.

The report provides information to parents but, equally, it is an opportunity to engage pupils in their own progress. Our policy of addressing pupils directly within reports, rather than using the third person, helps us to achieve this. This way, the pupil is encouraged to take responsibility for their performance, an approach that sits well with Langley School's focus on the individual child.

The school has also benefitted from the new style of parental reporting. The process of writing and reviewing the reports is now much more efficient. Teachers have access to their pupils' attainment and behaviour data on the management information system. They type in their comments and the report is then automatically emailed quickly and easily to the heads of year to review and add their own notes. We then email the reports out to parents, a much simpler task for our administrative team as there is no time-consuming mail merge or wasteful bulk printing.

Parents have told us that the reports provide them with information that they can really use to support their children's education, and our pupils find it easier to focus on their targets for the term ahead.

## Rewarding effort and achievement

It seems fair to say that pupils work harder to achieve their goals when they know that their efforts are being recognised. Another thing we have changed is to find a more innovative way to inspire our pupils to aim high.

The school's mission is to challenge all pupils, not just those who are particularly able or those who need additional support. By taking account of the specific needs and motivations of the individual pupil, we created a new digital rewards programme to ensure that achievement and effort was recognised more effectively across the school.

The programme is designed to give pupils a clear structure within which to progress. Pupils are awarded merits and these count towards award levels which range from bronze up to silver, gold and diamond. We thought it was important to reward effort and behaviour as well as progress, so a teacher

## Listening and talking

might issue a merit for contributing to a class discussion, for example, or for trying hard on the sports field.

The challenge with any rewards programme is encouraging pupils to value it and to strive to reach the next level. There is a risk that by recording merits on paper, achievements might be forgotten and it can be hard to keep track of which level each pupil has attained.

Our teachers enter the merits they award onto our computer system, and we have set up alerts through the data analysis tool we use, SIMS Discover, to let teachers know when a pupil they teach has entered a new band. This way, we make sure that the achievements of each pupil are recognised and can be celebrated in a timely fashion. This has gone down very well with the pupils who are keen to work hard for every merit.

## Getting the message across

Having embraced technology to drive greater achievement, it

seemed a natural next step to expand electronic communication into other areas too, particularly keeping parents up to date.

Rather than relying on the post or running the risk of letters being lost in the depths of a school bag, we now use email and SMS to reach parents. This has been well received, particularly by families who live abroad, as information can be distributed much more quickly and efficiently. We also send a series of reminder texts out before each parents' evening, and this has helped to encourage much higher levels of attendance. After all, what better way to reach the digital age parent?

By making better use of technology, we have made great strides in motivating our pupils to achieve, and also helped their families to provide that all-important support from home. This ensures that the whole school community is playing its part in creating the right environment for our pupils to succeed.

*Frank Butt is deputy head of Langley School.*

## HERE & THERE

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



Photo Adam Scott Photography

## Bromsgrove School win NatWest U18 Schools Cup

In a very exciting match against Dulwich College at Twickenham on 25th March, Bromsgrove ran out 30-18 winners.

Dulwich College were defending champions, having won the Cup for the last three years, this being their fourth successive finals appearance. They had been unbeaten in their previous 33 matches and had scored over 50 points in their semi-final match. By contrast, this was Bromsgrove's first final for the Schools Cup, having previously made it through to the semi-finals.

It was a marvellous game played by two superb sides. The handling by our team was almost flawless and the running rugby the best we have seen all season. Captain and Man of the Match Luke White controlled the game brilliantly, converting three tries, slotting three penalties, and his cross-field chip kick to find wing Cooper Bent in space drove his team into the lead with the game finely-poised and ten minutes remaining. Dulwich threw everything they had at the Bromsgrove line but couldn't put a dent in it.

Almost 1000 supporters, pupils, parents, staff and Old Bromsgrovians went to Twickenham to cheer on our boys and the match was a nail-biting affair – there was a live stream going on at school for those of us who couldn't go to the final.

# Communication

A housemaster follows his nose

*Parents visit the school regularly.*



I knew I had work to do when a mother called me last week and asked: “Why are you allowing the other boys to throw things at my son?” I had a problem, and not with the boys.

When boarding schools were invented, the housemaster had complete responsibility for the boys in his house. He also had total and exclusive knowledge of the boys’ activities and progress. Parents trusted him with the responsibility and relied on him for knowledge. At the end of term they received this knowledge in the form of a school report.

From September to December, in some cases July, the only contact between parents and pupil was a weekly, highly censored letter home, or, in later times, an occasional phone call from a very public shared phone. These letters and phone calls, like the reports, covered significant items: work and sport. They did not cover minor day-to-day events, and they certainly did not involve feelings.

Now schools actively encourage parents’ involvement at every stage of the educational process, and feelings are to be discussed openly in regular communication. Parents visit the school regularly (after all, they no longer serve in the Indian Civil Service or BAOR) to watch matches and plays, to attend conferences and lectures. They are part of the school community. Words like ‘partnership’ are also used. Above

all, regular communication between children and parents is encouraged.

This of course is easy, as every school child in the country has a mobile phone and a laptop computer, both probably far in advance of the school’s latest understanding of technology and therefore rules regulating their use. The original structure and management of the boarding house was not devised for pupils with access to 21st century technology, but the housemaster is still required to manage it in that way.

Most of the time the schoolboy uses the technology of his computer and phone to play games, cheat with coursework, watch pornography, and send Skype messages to girls while his friends perform, or at least simulate, lewd acts behind him. But the most dangerous aspect of the boarder’s access to technology is the ease of communication with his parents.

Whatever had actually happened, this ease of communication was the cause of the problem with which I was faced when that mother called and asked why I was allowing boys to throw things at her son. I knew I could not explain that if the boys had indeed thrown anything at her son I had not allowed them to do it and so they had broken the rules in doing so.

Instead, I told her that this did indeed sound distressing and that I would look into it immediately and let her know

## Listening and talking

exactly what had happened. This first attempt to calm the situation was not immediately successful, as she told me that she already knew exactly what had happened because her son had told her. Indeed I had some work ahead of me.

I was fairly confident I knew what had happened. Smaller schoolboys spend much of their free time climbing on each other. Of course, boarding school life is very busy, but they have some unsupervised free time, and they spend it in close proximity to each other. They gather in one room and make playful physical contact with each other. They resemble puppies in a basket.

But sooner or later one of them gets hurt. Or he feels that the others imposed themselves on him when he did not want them to. Or he feels that they have not included him in something he would like to have done. He is unhappy. And he expects to be happy all of the time. As indeed does his mother. (Though does she secretly hope he is not too happy away from home, away from her?)

In this particular instance I knew there was also a fairly high probability that her spoilt selfish son had annoyed the boys around him so much that they had simply had enough of him. However, I could not of course say any of this; I had to be patient with the mother, even indulgent. I allowed her to tell her story which I knew would be some way from the truth: her son's original account would have failed to mention anything he had done which may have annoyed the other boys, and he would have chosen inflammatory vocabulary which judged the case ('bullied' for example), rather than an accurate, objective description of events.

She in turn may have misheard, or, in her distress, misunderstood or misremembered, and then been equally cavalier in her use of language, so the story she then told me was some way from the truth of what actually happened when ten boys were in one room together. I just had to listen.

Eventually I had another chance to speak. I did all I could to reassure the mother without this time implying that we did not yet know the facts. I told her that I would almost certainly be able to explain everything very soon. My first opportunity to speak to the boy was that evening. I approached the subject carefully, remembering his mother's insistence that I should on no account mention the fact that she had called; as though I would. I found a trivial reason to open up a conversation with the boy, and having covered that topic added more generally:

"How are things going this term?"

"Great, thanks sir, I am really enjoying myself."

"Good, good. Work going well?"

"Oh yes, I got an A in the last maths test and I think I am going up a set."

"Excellent. Games?"

"Really good. I'm in the 3rds, and we won 25-3 on Saturday. And the house team keeps winning, I really enjoy playing in the house team."

"Ah yes, the house, enjoying that?"

"Loving it. I think we have the best group in the school."

"Get on with everyone?"

"Yes. I think I have already made better friends than I had at prep school."

"No problems with anyone?"

"None at all."

By now I was getting irritated as this line of questioning was clearly not leading me to the material I needed to cover, so went directly to the point and named the boy who, according to his mother, had been torturing him earlier that day.

"Oh he's my best friend."

I no longer had the patience to keep his mother's call a secret.

"That isn't what you told mother, is it."

"Well he did annoy me this morning when we were all in his room."

"What happened?"

"We were throwing a water bottle to each other and I wasn't looking and it hit me on the chest."

"You were throwing a water bottle to each other?"

"Yes. Sorry."

"Not at each other, then?"

"I don't understand."

"Don't worry. So you called your mother?"

"Yes."

"And told her he was bullying you?"

"Yes."

"Did you think your mother could solve the problem?"

"No."

"Do you think I might have been able to solve the problem?"

"I didn't think I should bother you with something so minor."

"You were right. But you called your mother and told her that the others were bullying you and that you hated school, the house and all of the other boys?"

"Yes sir."

"Have you called her since to tell her this boy is in fact your best friend?"

"No."

"Well do so immediately."

*O R Houseman started his teaching career at Selhurst where his Headmaster described him as 'a very safe pair of hands'.*

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*'Most of the time the schoolboy uses the technology of his computer and phone to play games, cheat with coursework, watch pornography, and send Skype messages to girls while his friends perform, or at least simulate, lewd acts behind him. But the most dangerous aspect of the boarder's access to technology is the ease of communication with his parents.'*

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# Are we sleepwalking into a recruitment crisis?

Ian Hunt sees a brain drain in his crystal ball

A perfect storm is brewing. In London alone over the next four years, there are predicted to be 4000 extra teachers required for schools. It would be misleading to extrapolate this figure out through the rest of the UK, but as a guide it makes sobering reading for schools wishing to recruit top quality staff.

However, this is only half the story. There are currently more than 100,000 British teachers working in schools abroad. Of the more than 7000 international schools worldwide, 42% are 'British' curriculum schools and the UK is now the single biggest supplier of staff to the sector. By 2024 it is predicted that there will be more than 12,000 international schools teaching more than 6.9m students, requiring more than 600,000 members of staff.

Whether they follow the National Curriculum or a hybrid of PIC, IGCSE and IB is irrelevant; the demand will be for a significant number of 'British' teachers to staff them. Add to this the vacancies in teacher training institutions and, even allowing for the fact that there are different routes to becoming a teacher, it becomes obvious that we all have a huge problem.



Ian Hunt

Of course, like any crisis, it will not affect everyone equally at the same time. But unless there is a fundamental upward shift in the number of teachers being recruited into the profession – and retained – a crisis it will be.

So, if you are either running a school or are looking to open a new campus somewhere in the world, what should you do? Well, the first thing is to not be complacent. Look at your terms and conditions and at the packages you are able to offer. Make the governors aware of the impending situation, since budgets will need to be adjusted. But UK school leaders will also need to change their fundamental thinking.

Not so long ago, although there were some excellent teachers who went abroad, the general perception was that the majority of staff departed these shores for three main reasons – either they were not good enough to cut it in the UK; or they were running away from something; or they were educational tourists, taking a teaching post in various exotic locations to fund their travel aspirations, less committed, less skilled and certainly less employable back in the UK.

In today's overseas schools this is increasingly no longer the case. The best overseas schools have got their act together in terms of teaching and learning, CPD and performance management. They are matching UK schools in terms of results and value added data. They are being run professionally and are educationally very sound. Interestingly, ex pat parents are beginning to look at these schools as places to keep their children for sixth form study, rather than sending them back to the UK. At Dubai College for example, upper sixth leavers regularly secure Oxbridge, Ivy League and Russell Group university places.

This development and improvement in overseas schools has coincided with good quality staff heading abroad, not for a holiday or an escape, but because they see this as part of their career development. Named UK 'brands' such as Brighton, Dulwich, Wellington and Harrow have all set up high quality overseas campuses that reflect the excellent standards to be found at their UK namesakes. And the teaching environments in many of these schools certainly leave nothing to the imagination: resources are plentiful and cutting edge, and the students are highly motivated.

The international teaching market is much more fluid than the UK, so it is not a case of dead men's shoes. Teachers can gain valuable and, importantly, relevant management experience in these good schools. But the acid test is the attitude of the schools in this country when teachers want to come back to the UK. Will there be a snobbery shown when the long list is compiled? Will the idea of Skypeing be frowned upon?

My feeling is that the most proactive and forward thinking UK Heads are already looking abroad with a different view. They

## Recruitment and promotion

can see the value of the experience gained and also understand that the process is going to be an integral part of the future. Their responsibility is to ensure that their own staff are encouraged to be a part of the world-wide teaching community. Let them go, encourage them when they come back, and create a much healthier common room all round: teaching staff with a global perspective in a global environment – now there's a thought! And what does this mean for teachers? Well, the best ones will be in even more demand, both in the UK and overseas. At a recent 'teach abroad?' seminar in London, I was both surprised and impressed by the volume and quality of the enquiries by really thoughtful and excellent teachers.

It may well be that in the coming year, a rising number of staff who had previously not considered a spell abroad will do so. A key factor, as I have already indicated, will be the foresight of UK Heads who see the genuine value of this part of a CV. Like any job, staff will have to choose wisely, but the rewards are there in terms of packages, CPD, job satisfaction and experience. And it is clear that this experience can be

really valuable when they come back to the UK to resume their career here.

What about salaries, both here and abroad? They are already creeping up in some overseas territories, a ripple effect that is certainly going to be impacting on the UK in the coming years. Making oneself relevant for the next post is always a key aspect of any career progression. This involves many different decisions in terms of experience and CPD. However, for once, if the crystal ball is offering a glimpse into the future, it just might not be a bad time to be a teacher, especially for the young and ambitious.

Don't buy the Porsche just yet, but perhaps it might be time to put Top Gear onto 'Record'!

*Ian Hunt joined Gabbittas Education as Managing Director in January 2012. He first taught at Millfield, where he was senior tutor and a senior housemaster. In 2004 he became senior deputy head at Wellingborough School and was appointed Warden of Llandovery College in 2008.*

# Managing internal promotion in schools

## A director of studies surveys the territory

When filling a vacant managerial or leadership post, there are several advantages in appointing an internal candidate. It has become clear in the corporate world that promoting internally is often preferable to hiring someone from outside the company.

External hires, in a study by Matthew Bidwell between 2003-2009, commanded salaries 18% higher than those appointed internally, with employers paying more in the hope that the relatively unknown external hire's skillset would match the level of salary, and the hired demanding higher wages as a form of insurance in case their move went wrong. Indeed, more importantly, up to 60% of those externally hired did not work out, compared to 25% of internal promotions.

This was because internal candidates have already had their performance scrutinized over a lengthy period of time; already fit into the organization's culture; and already know the networks through which things get done. External hires can also slow down an organisation by distracting other team members who need to teach them the ropes. A culture of internal promotion boosts employee morale and, therefore, retention, as they can see that there is an upward path within the organisation that leads to promotion without having to change employer.

While schools are not FTSE100 companies, they are still complex organisations, with management or leadership structures that need to be able to work efficiently if they are to deliver effective teaching and learning. Like any company, schools have dynamics that are affected by any number of factors in the workplace, not least the relative standing of

teachers. While internal promotion may have numerous desirable advantages, it can also present challenges for the individual upon whom that promotion has been bestowed and the group within which they are operating.

This article is inspired in part by two contributions to the *Harvard Business Review*: Michael Watkins's 'Making the Shift from Peer to Boss' and Amy Gallo's 'How to Manage Your Former Peers'. It argues that the most effective way to lead educational change after internal promotion within a school is:

- to establish one's authority effectively and manage the disappointment of others;
- to recalibrate relationships through 360 degrees, with existing members of the senior leadership as well as with the staffroom as a whole;
- and to pace change skilfully, while maintaining one's integrity.

### Establishing authority and managing disappointment

The problem inherent in internal promotion in schools is that the teacher promoted has been raised above colleagues who not very long ago were equal in status. The internal hire has to balance the desire to make changes that will improve the school's teaching and learning – that is, after all, why they were appointed – with the recognition that these changes will only be effective if the staffroom can be brought on board.

Not everything can be done in the first few weeks of a new job, but it is important from the very beginning to establish



*Recalibrating relationships.*

the tenor of the new leadership through behaving in a way that will signify its future direction. This should put at rest the minds of colleagues who are anxious and unclear about the future direction of the school's leadership, or it should at least convince enough colleagues to make sure that the inveterate naysayers become minority voices.

Michael Watkins describes this as walking 'a knife's edge between under- and over-doing control'. On the one extreme there is a temptation for the new leader to act as a 'super-peer', focusing too much on patronizing over-coaching and smothering over-supporting. On the other extreme the new leader might be tempted to issue a flurry of dictatorial edicts to show that they are in charge and that Things Must Change.

Watkins's solution, predictably, is to strike for the middle ground, balancing consultation with decision-making, showing an appreciation for the views of others and, at the same time, a decisive awareness of leadership responsibility.

Amy Gallo agrees with the need to establish 'credibility and authority', but without acting 'like the promotion's gone to [their] head'. The new situation requires a recalibration of existing relationships that will be under tight public scrutiny as every move is observed and interpreted. Gallo puts great emphasis on how the new boss establishes authority – not swaggering about telling everyone who is in charge but, rather, listening to the concerns of former peers and making it clear they are there to support them in achieving success.

There will, however, almost certainly be disappointed colleagues who had competed for the post. They may feel wounded and their emotional wellbeing, engagement and

productivity may be impaired. They have not got the new job with its increased financial reward and professional or social status; they may feel emotionally dislocated from the promoted former colleague and those who promoted him or her; they may not understand why they have been overlooked; and they may feel that they are not in control of their future advancement and prosperity.

Such a situation can be particularly intense and sore in schools where, through staffroom interaction and general observation, colleagues are all too familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses. A disappointed colleague might brood over the successful candidate's perceived weaknesses, or feel a sense of injustice in having lost out.

Even if unsuccessful candidates are not embittered, they will probably feel disappointed. They might take the rejection as an implicit (or explicit) criticism of their previous work or future potential. They may be concerned that they have reached a dead end which requires significant rethinking, perhaps even the upheaval of finding a new employer.

Gallo advises that you let the competitor adjust to the new scenario, show they are appreciated, maintain that they are still a crucial part of the team, and that you will support their own future development. If disappointed colleagues do not reach the stage of acceptance, Watkins suggests that it is the new leader's role to find them what he euphemistically calls 'other opportunities'.

He argues that the new leader cannot afford to be undermined by a former peer. It is necessary to keep an eye out for potentially corrosive alliances since disappointed colleagues

## Recruitment and promotion

may try to undermine reforms in an attempt to 'prove' that the Head made the wrong choice.

Once the territory is known and the matrix of relationships is appreciated, then is the time to be decisive, either through the concerted implementation of reforms with colleagues who are on board, or by helping to find new opportunities for those who are not and never will be.

### Recalibrating relationships

The newly-promoted leader will be in a new peer group and will need to act socially as well as professionally in appropriate ways. Performance expectations will increase: the job is more difficult than the one they previously held, the responsibilities are greater and they are now accountable for a section of the school.

To be transparent about the performance of former peers – perhaps former close friends – is challenging, especially if that performance is deemed unsatisfactory. There will be conversations with previously senior colleagues that may have a direct impact on their future. Loyalties have to shift to the senior management team since the performance of the teaching staff has a direct impact on the learning of the pupils.

Taking on responsibility for the performance of an aspect of the school as a whole, such as pastoral care or academic performance, is a new challenge. To gain a good whole-school perspective, leaders need to be shrewd observers, opening up formal and informal communication networks with key players in different parts of the school.

These networks may be wider than the ones in which the internal hire was previously engaged and may extend outside the school with governors or with opposite numbers in other institutions. They will need to participate in wider educational debates to ensure that their performance and the teaching and learning of the pupils is derived from the best available practice.

In the staffroom, it is very likely that the teachers the newly-promoted internal hire is now supervising were once friends. They may have known each other for a number of years, socialized outside school, bonded over griping about perceived inadequacies in the school. This will need to change to avoid allegations of favouritism and to enable the effective performance management that cannot occur if one is afraid of upsetting personal relationships.

Ultimately, the process involves integrity and honesty; clear and transparent performance management procedures that apply to all, no matter how friendly one used to be with colleagues; and the clear statement that you may have socialized a lot together in the past – and you will no doubt do so again – but that will not affect the integrity of the performance management procedure.

Gallo has highlighted the potentially corrosive effects on one's own performance if too much attention is paid to colleagues who were once friends. For instance, the newly-promoted leader may well have been used to sharing school gossip, but will now need to keep much sensitive information to themselves.

At the same time they must keep channels of communication open and not seem to be aloof and out of touch. It is sensible to ensure that their former peers know that changes will not be coming out of the blue, so that they are not wrong-footed or alienated. While maintaining healthy relationships with one's

former peers, one's professional performance is improved by finding others from whom one can learn and develop.

### Pacing change and maintaining integrity

While leading effective change after internal promotion might present particular challenges, there are some core principles that should be followed by leaders, whether they are appointed from within the organization or outside.

The first of these principles is to pace change. Twenty per cent of respondents to the Sutton Trust's 'Teacher Voice' survey (2012) reported that 'constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education' was a cause of dissatisfaction at work, with 19% concerned about 'insufficient time to do work adequately' and 17% the resultant 'amount of bureaucracy or paperwork'.

Gallo advises the new boss to 'tread lightly at first'. Even though they may be buzzing with ideas for change, no one will thank them for overhauling existing systems straight away. Authority needs to be established and relationships worked on before major changes can take place. At the same time, you need to signal your intention not just to sit complacently, taking the enhanced salary while not doing anything substantive.

Small changes signal a willingness to make necessary reforms; seismic changes can come later. In making changes, there is a difficult balance to strike between being seen as someone who alienates their colleagues by issuing edicts like a divine right monarch or as someone with no ideas of their own who just administers the results of staffroom referenda.

Most importantly, all changes must be made with integrity and authenticity at their core. It is very easy to talk the talk when it comes to communicating ideas about fairness and having the core business of the school – teaching and learning – at heart. It is more difficult, yet absolutely crucial, to walk the walk.

Watkins observes that former colleagues will be watching closely to see if a new leader will be favouring friends or following an agenda centred on personal advancement or the implementation of pet schemes. The simplest way to counter such accusations is to implement transparent and fair performance management procedures, to maintain a committed and 'principled focus on doing what is right', and to stand or fall according to those principles.

Leading people requires vision, commitment, selflessness, calmness, visibility, integrity and humanity; a clear sense of purpose; the ability to manage social distance and to empower followers; and an intuitive sense for situations.

The internally promoted leader will need to recalibrate relationships with all members of the organization, some of whom will require more from you, some of whom will see less of you in the pub. The Golden Rule for those who have received internal promotion, especially in the middle of a hostile situation, is to remain focused on those individuals for whose benefit the school exists: the pupils.

*Janet Mikson-Newth is a director of studies with a long-standing interest in school leadership.*



Chris Muller

# Getting ready for the top job – and bucking a mysterious trend

Chris Muller, the newly-appointed Head of Sir William Perkins's School, talks about the challenges and rewards of leading a school and how you can best prepare for Headship

It was a huge honour to be appointed Head of a very successful school last year: the opportunity, the excitement and the potential to help shape the curve of countless young people's lives must surely rank as one of the most rewarding jobs anyone could undertake. Yet, to my utter surprise, the results of a survey on the topic conducted recently by the Independent Schools Council (ISC) seem to suggest that many potential future school leaders are reluctant to step up to the plate. Am I missing something?

The figures are simply extraordinary and overwhelmingly depressing, if true: a startling 44% of Heads questioned in the ISC survey indicated that they plan to leave their posts in 2015 and, of the senior staff who said they would remain in the profession, only 31% wanted to become a school Head.

Despite an abundance of opportunity for the ambitious future Head, why are so few staff eager to move up the leadership ladder? What are the perceived barriers to promotion? Of course, taking on the Headship of any school is a daunting prospect – the sense of responsibility can be intimidating – but

the chance to put your ideas into practice so that the future lives of our students are improved is an undoubted reward and brings with it a huge amount of personal satisfaction. So what would my advice be to anyone hoping to step to Headship?

## Leading a team to excellence

I took up the position of Head of Sir William Perkins's in September 2014. This is a highly-regarded Surrey school for girls aged 11 to 18 and is academically very successful. My appointment was part of an increasing trend of deputy heads who have been promoted internally. There are a number of key advantages to this. In my own case, I was fortunate to have had several fulfilling years as deputy head, working for an inspirational Head who took my professional development seriously. I knew the school very well – both staff and pupils.

Although familiar with the customs and practice of the school, it soon became clear how different the two roles of Head and deputy really are. Put simply, as Head, you have a unique set of responsibilities. As deputy head or director of



Sir William Perkins's School

## Recruitment and promotion



*Chris Muller and students.*

studies, for example, your role can often be quite focused: it might be centred on maintaining or improving the quality of the academic curriculum or pastoral care. As the Head, however, you have ultimate responsibility for everything that takes place in your school, from finance and maintenance to leading the school community – staff, students, governors and parents. In short, the buck stops with you.

I have learned that the key is to recognise that you cannot do everything yourself. It is essential to foster an environment of mutual trust, especially with your senior team. Everyone should be encouraged to develop their talents and this is essential to a school's success. You may be apprehensive about taking responsibility for the accounts, but if the school has a good bursar you can work together to ensure strong financial management.

### **Walking the pathway to leadership**

In my own preparation for the top job, I found it very helpful to explore the mind-set required for Headship. This method was suggested to me by a current Head when I was applying for senior positions: try to walk around your school imagining what you would do if you were the Head. What might make the school a better place in which to teach and learn?

This is something that I did regularly for about four years before taking the leap and I found it incredibly useful, not least as preparation for the rigorous interview process. By adopting this approach, an aspiring Head will become accustomed to thinking at a more strategic level – an essential skill in their new role.

### **The big picture**

Making higher level decisions is something a new Head needs to adapt to swiftly and, to this end, it is always important to have information ready at hand. Whether you are a Head who is confident in accessing this information or you are fortunate to have a team of people providing you with it, data is essential to help you understand the strengths of a school and where improvements might need to be made.

By tracking the attainment data stored in our SIMS management information system over a period of time, important trends can be identified simply and, where necessary, acted upon. I have found it of inestimable value to examine closely the academic work of a representative sample of students in each year group regularly. This has helped me to ensure that the school maintains high quality teaching and learning right across the year groups.

### **Build on your strengths**

I think that one of the biggest challenges any new Head faces is to make the changes necessary to take a school to the next level of excellence while retaining its important traditions and ethos. To achieve this balance requires careful consideration and patience.

It is sometimes said that the supreme function of a leader is to judge the moment for reform: part of this judgement is to encourage others to share your vision and ensure that the whole team is working towards the same goals. A personal method which I use frequently is to ask myself: when I am not there, does the school run as I would like it to run?

Recognising the strengths of the people who work for you is an important element for any Head who hopes to build a strong team. The senior leadership should be composed of individuals who possess the strength of character to take on responsibility and can take decisions. All good Heads empower their staff to be the best professionals they can be and give them the confidence to develop their own leadership skills.

### **Moving with the times**

In this respect, thinking about the ISC survey results, perhaps one of the reasons that senior staff might be holding back from the move to Headship is that the role has undergone many changes in recent years. There are undoubtedly higher expectations from parents, combined with increased pressures to develop results. Parents rightly want to be much better informed about their child's education and are more willing to hold schools to account.

As Head, you need to ensure that your school takes every opportunity to shout about the excellent education it provides in a way that will engage both prospective and existing parents. In our experience, many parents are sophisticated users of technology and they want to follow the school on Twitter; they rather enjoy seeing pictures of that afternoon's chemistry practical in which their child took part. This helps them to feel more involved in school life and they can talk to their child about the activities they have been participating in at home.

### My five top tips for aspiring school Heads

Being a school Head is incredibly fulfilling. No two days are the same. If you are ready to take the next step up the career ladder, here are my tips on what you can do that will not only help to improve your chances of winning a Headship, but will also give you the confidence to lead a school in the future.

Become accustomed to thinking more strategically about the journey a school might need to take towards excellence.

This can take time, so the sooner you start the better.

Become more familiar with your school's data, especially the financial figures. The role demands that you understand the strengths and weaknesses of a school, so getting to grips with information as varied in detail as pupils' attendance and attainment to the staffing costs will help hugely.

Consider how you would manage the process of change. How would you nurture the character and ethos of a school and take staff with you when changes need to be made?

Find the time to visit other schools and have conversations with school Heads. This will provide you with some great insight into the demands and rewards of the job.

And, finally, start applying. We are all on a learning journey, so be brave and go for it!

*Chris Muller has been Head of Sir William Perkins's School since September 2014.*

## HERE & THERE

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



## Freddie Reynard wins Royal Opera House Fanfare Competition 2015

Each spring, The Royal Opera House in London runs a national competition to find ten young composers, aged between 11 and 16, who create their own fanfares which are then played each night before the opera and ballet performances during the Opera House summer season.

Wellington School rose to the challenge and entered 31 fanfares composed by pupils in Years 8 and 10. Most had very little experience of composing music for an orchestra and so the music department were delighted to hear that, out of 40 fanfares short-listed, nine were composed by Wellington School students.

Freddie, a music GCSE student and keen film score composer, was the winner of this year's competition. He was delighted to be invited up to the Royal Opera House to work with renowned composer Duncan Chapman, as well as members of the Opera House Orchestra. He was given a tour behind the scenes, had lunch in the artists' canteen and worked on scoring his fanfare. In April he returns to London to hear his fanfare recorded by the orchestra under the baton of the eminent conductor Antonio Pappano. In May he will attend a ballet triple bill at the Opera House where he will hear his fanfare performed to that evening's audience.

# STEM sisters

Girls at GSA schools achieve a disproportionately large share of the top grades in sciences, maths and languages. Compared to all girls nationally, they are 75% more likely to take maths A level; 70% more likely to take chemistry; and two-and-a-half times as likely to take physics.

Bucking national trends, over 55% of girls at GSA schools take a STEM subject at A level. Just under two fifths take maths and just over two fifths take at least one science, with a quarter of girls taking at least one language A level.

As Alun Jones, President of the GSA, recently said: "There is a proven link between poor performance in science and learning environments that, however unintentionally, promulgate age-old stereotypes about what girls should study and how well they are likely to do. The relative lack of stereotypical expectations and presumptions rooted in gender that girls enjoy in independent girls' schools means that they not only perform well in science, they choose to continue to study it at A level."



Recognising leading practitioners in the field is an important part of maintaining this vital focus on STEM subjects. Sheffield High School's assistant head, Kathryn Boulton-Pratt was a winner at the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) Advisor of the year award in 2013.

She was interviewed about her achievement on the BBC *Breakfast* programme and described how schools can address the skills gap in the area of engineering and, particularly, how to encourage more girls to consider careers in this field.

More recently, on 29th January 2014, Kathryn spoke at the Institute for Mechanical Engineers as part of the Engineering4Teachers conference. She mentioned several of the projects on offer to the girls at Sheffield High, including the annual Go4SET Challenge and the Engineering Development Trusts scheme for involving sixth formers working with engineers on real life projects.

A current example of these projects is what is being done by four Year 12 girls who are working with the construction and civil engineering company AMEY on a project to re-design the frontage of the Bridlington Railway Station.

She spoke alongside the immediate past president of IMechE, Professor Patrick Kniveton (Head of Engineering at Rolls Royce), Jane Simpson (Chief Engineer at Network Rail) and Paul Dawson (UK Director of Research Design and Development at Dyson). Not surprisingly Mrs Boulton-Pratt described the event as being very fast-paced and "having a real buzz", as the opportunities for young people within the engineering field were showcased and keenly discussed.

## Bringing STEM to life

Back at school, Kathryn describes the approach of staff and pupils in keeping up the momentum from the award and building on the school's long-standing commitment to STEM subjects as befits the leading girls' school in the Steel City.

'At Sheffield High School, the STEM subjects of science, maths and computing have long been popular with students from reception to the sixth form. The school encourages the girls to have a "can do" approach to everything they get involved in and this is vital in subjects that can be traditionally seen as more difficult or more male orientated.

The number of students taking one or more of these subjects at A level is very healthy and, increasingly, girls are going on to university to study engineering, physical science, maths and computer science based degrees.

Providing opportunities outside the classroom enables students to see how the theory learnt in a lesson can be applied to solve problems, improve situations and create useful devices. We tried to start small several years ago with an engineering challenge for year 8 students. This quickly became a whole day event for the entire year group!

Sixteen young engineers, town planners and project managers joined us from a local company and worked with the girls to design and build bridges to a certain specification. Creativity, teamwork, organisation and perseverance were just a few of the skills used by both students and helpers.

Evaluating the day we realised what an important contribution our visitors made as they spoke to the girls about their own work and how they had come to be in these jobs, as well as encouraging them and boosting their enthusiasm as they tackled their various tasks. The engineering challenge is now an annual activity for our year 8 students.

Buoyed by our success we introduced more projects and competitions for our students, trying whenever possible to involve young scientists and engineers from universities, industry and business to bring their expertise and to be role models for our girls. So much is now happening that we have asked a young member of staff, Dr Emma Rozgowska, to take responsibility for STEM throughout school.

She co-ordinates events, taking the lead in many of them and, in doing so, she is proving a great role model for the girls. Many of the science staff are involved in designing



*HRH Princess Royal presents the award.*

or delivering activities for students from our own and local primary schools through to the sixth form.

Very recently two student teachers on their first practice supervised a group of key stage 3 pupils who had designed a “cooling hard hat” for construction workers to wear in a harsh desert environment as part of the BP Challenge.

There are now several organisations offering STEM based opportunities. Our year 9 students have really enjoyed taking part in the Go4SET challenge run by the Engineering Development Trust (EDT). We have taken part for the past four years and won the award for best project for the last two.

Each group has mentors from a local engineering company and ten weeks to complete their chosen project. Over the years the girls have had the opportunity to work with engineers from ARUP, NG Bailey, Mott McDonald and Volkerrail. They have worked on a variety of projects including designing facilities to increase sport in our school, harvesting and effectively using rainwater in school, and building flood defences for Sheffield’s river Don.

This year, for the first time, a group of year 12 girls are involved in the Engineering Education Scheme, also delivered by the EDT. The students, all budding engineers, are working with AMEY on a real life project to redevelop the approach to Bridlington Train Station.

As well as designing structures, they have had to think about traffic management and the movement of pedestrians through the area. Original ideas for underground parking had to be abandoned following a site visit and a better understanding of the nature of the ground on which the station is built.

The girls had the chance to use Sheffield Hallam University workshops to develop, build and test solutions for their project. This was an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills not currently accessible at school. A scale model of a pedestrian shelter, designed and constructed by the students, will be used by AMEY.

The girls are now finishing off their technical report before giving it, along with a verbal presentation of their solution, to a panel of professional engineers in the near future. All

the girls agree that they have been challenged by the scheme, but they have had the chance to develop skills in industrial enterprise, creativity and innovation whilst gaining extensive experience of problem-solving, team-working and project management.

These are just a few of the activities we involve our students in. Girls have recently been successful in the local round of the RSC’s Young Analyst Competition, reached the National Finals of the Astrellas Innovation Challenge and won a prize at the Teen Tech Challenge day.

At Sheffield High School we will be continuing to encourage and inspire more girls to take up careers in engineering, science, maths and technology by offering as many different opportunities as possible. Working with local companies and universities so that the students can meet young people already making their mark in these careers is essential in enabling us to do this effectively.’

*Kathryn Boulton-Pratt is an assistant head at Sheffield High School (GDST).*



*...and speaking at the Institute.*

# Sheffield High's Sarah is the UK Young Scientist of the Year

Sheffield High School Year 13 student Sarah Sobka has been crowned UK Young Scientist of the Year, from a field of over 2000 other hopefuls, for her work on research into new drugs for cystic fibrosis patients.

Sarah presented her work at the Big Bang Fair in Birmingham and said she was “really grateful to win the award, but it was a bit of shock”. She did her research work during a four-week period last year at the University of Sheffield’s department of biomedical science, which is ranked number one in the UK for the impact and quality of its medical research in the Research Excellence Framework 2014, and in the top five for its biological science research.

Working as part of a team at the University led by senior lecturer Dr Louise Robson, Sarah helped to examine a drug that is commonly used to treat women with Irritable Bowel Syndrome to see if it could be used to treat cystic fibrosis.



*Sarah Sobka interviewed.*



*Sarah Sobka on BBC Breakfast.*

This incurable disease is one of the UK’s most common life-threatening inherited conditions, suffered by over 10,000 people according to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. It affects internal organs, especially the lungs and digestive system, by clogging them with thick, sticky mucus, making it hard for sufferers to breathe and digest food.

Sarah said she had become “attached to cystic fibrosis” after her work placement and hopes to pursue a career in medicine and research. “I was a small part in a really big paper,” she said, “but every small step is important. The more we know the more help that gives us in synthesising new drugs. Every little bit of understanding helps.”

Sarah has attracted a lot of media interest and has already appeared on BBC *Breakfast* on Saturday morning. She is due to appear on the University of Sheffield Radio and TV stations as well as on BBC Radio Sheffield and BBC’s *Look North* programme. To top it all, Sarah has now been invited to speak to the Fellows of the Royal Society of Medicine in September.

# Hymers students take part in explosive photography



Year 10 pupils at Hymers College were treated to an explosive photographic experience thanks to professional liquids photographer David Lund. David, from Brigg in Lincolnshire, covered balloons with brightly coloured powders and liquids and instructed pupils on how to take photographs of them at the moment they were popped.

Using a 39 megapixel digital Hassleblad camera and specialist lighting that allows capture of one 10,000th of a second, David and the pupils burst the balloons in different places to see what effect that would have on the spray pattern of the contents. They captured a dramatic array of colourful images which demonstrated the spectacular ways liquids and powders dispersed in the microseconds after the needle pierced the balloons.

David, who has worked for some of the world's biggest drink brands and is known for his specialism in liquids, said he was keen to emphasise how commercial photography can still be creative and exciting.

"A lot of the principles we used in this shoot could easily transfer over to a campaign advertising, for example, coloured lipsticks. Some of the drinks images that are used in big advertising campaigns are a combination of more than 100 different shots. That is what I wanted to demonstrate to the pupils at Hymers, the endless array of possibilities that photography can offer, and I wanted to get that across in a really fun and interesting way."

David Elstone, Head Teacher at Hymers, watched some of the photographs being taken. "David's demonstration was absolutely fantastic, our year 10 pupils have never seen anything like it and neither have I. The images they produced were outstanding. Everyone was so grateful to him for giving up his time and producing such an engaging display, he is an incredibly talented man."

The pupils were protected from the exploding balloons by an indoor transparent tent that captured all the powder or liquid. They were popped by a needle tied to a stick, and the sound of the balloon bursting triggered the camera to capture the shot. The needle was then digitally erased from the final image in Photoshop.

Eleanor Roberts, a year 10 student at Hymers, said the workshop was one of the most fascinating things she had attended. "It really opened my eyes to the different aspects of photography which I did not know about before. Bursting the balloons in different places made the contents spray out in such a variety of patterns and the bright colours meant it produced some really beautiful images."

*The images accompanying this article are a selection from David Lund's workshop with Year 10.*

*Hymers College, Hull, was founded by the mathematician John Hymers in 1885 'for the training of intelligence in whatever social rank of life it may be found among the vast and varied population of the Town'.*

# Inspections can help, honest!

David Smith sees the iceberg of progression

Say what you like about inspections, they do have a way of focusing the mind. Felsted School in Essex was recently subjected to scrutiny and, happily, it came through with the highest rating possible.

Prior to the inspection, the art department at Felsted knew what it was doing but had difficulty articulating its philosophy in under three volumes. As every art teacher knows, each examination board and the International Baccalaureate devote pages to describing and promoting good practice.

The art teacher's job is to present this to the pupils in a way they can grasp easily. Many wordy documents had been produced over the years at Felsted, each one of which had a tendency to confuse years 10 through to 13 rather than enlighten them. Until, that is, we approached the problem from an artist's point of view rather than as 'educators'.

If we accept that in photography, for example, the camera is not the photographer, then it is easy to see how the computer is not the user and the paintbrush is not the artist. In other words the artist, or rather what the artist does, is the most important element in the creative process. This rather obvious fact was often forgotten as the baby endlessly disappeared with the bath water in the manic search for the eduspeak Holy Grail.

However the stunning revelation that art was at the centre of things was not, in itself, going to cut any mustard. After all, can you imagine presenting a document for inspection that said: 'Art is the most important factor in the delivery of art education at Felsted School'? Once we had the nub of the problem by the time the inspectors arrived, we had honed what we do to five words and a diagram.

The key question was: what does an artist/student need to consider in order to successfully create a work of art for GCSE, AS, A2 or the IB? The answer came down to five words beginning with C and a triangle.

The ability to focus the student's mind on what is essential is an extremely powerful tool. To fix in the student's mind a simple mantra can be liberating for all concerned. The five Cs are: Composition, colour, *chiaroscuro*, communication and context.

The triangle we have called the Iceberg of Progression. Art teachers may find the following of use when it comes to a simple but comprehensive way of quantifying what we do.

All visual art, regardless of its type, requires each of the Cs. The first three are the practical parts. All works can be analysed in terms of composition even if at first glance there isn't any. Colour is the same: it is impossible to have any kind of art without colour being present or totally absent. *Chiaroscuro* likewise.

Whilst dealing with the 'big three' the student of art can consider texture, pattern *etc* as parts of the whole. Communication relates to what the work is trying to do or say and how; whilst Context fixes the work in, well, context. For example, it can be 'placed in the continuing interest in



Felsted Art School.

England of landscape painting which has been developing since the 18th century *etc*' or 'this work is site specific and will be positioned behind...'

In this way using just five words (incidentally we used the Italian word *Chiaroscuro* because it began with a C!), students can learn how to analyse both the works of others and their own art. By the sixth form we would hope that they have 'got it', but if they haven't, it is there as an armature upon which to build an argument. It will work for painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography, film and installation works and, for the seriously bright, also conceptual work. It works for A level history of art courses and we suspect it would work for many other subjects where analysis is required.

As practising artists, my department and I follow these simple Cs quite naturally in our own creations. We **compose**, we **colour**, we use light and dark, *aka* tone and we try to **communicate** through our work. We are all subject to influences too, and can place ourselves and our work in **context**.

The other simple but effective device we use is our diagram, the Iceberg of Progression which is, for the visually literate, a triangle split into 20 parts. Students start at the bottom and work their way up to the tip. This visual aid is just as effective for AS and A2 students as it is for those working on their GCSE terminal projects. In addition we have blank icebergs with spaces that can be tailored for individual pupils.

However it is used, its main purpose is to help with organising time and effort effectively at a very stressful period in the lives of adolescents. When our students are given a project or theme they mentally go straight to the end game. What they should do is arrive at the outcomes in stages and as organically as possible, whilst also hitting all the assessment targets along the way. Simple, unless you are an adolescent! What they need is help in organising their thoughts and this is what the Iceberg is for.

We know that it works but, as with the camera, it is just a tool.

*David Smith has been director of art at Felsted School in Essex on and off, (16 years as a housemaster) since 1987. He has exhibited at Royal Academy and the National Portrait Gallery but wishes to be considered a teacher of art above all else.*

# Moreton Hall's seventh Business Lunch

Following on from the Editor of *The Economist*, last year's speaker at Moreton Hall's annual Business Lunch, was never going to be easy, but Lord Digby Jones pulled it off with impressive style.

The Shropshire-based school has the tradition of a strong business focus, with its unique Moreton Enterprises now celebrating a history of over 30 years of trading. From students running the local railway station in the 1980s to today's sixth form directors, managers and 'staff' running a £50,000 company, Moreton girls have a fair grasp of what it takes to succeed in the business world.

When Moreton Enterprises was first conceived it included a working farm, the all-important Tuck Shop and a branch of Midland Bank. Its equally enterprising and, at the time, arch rival was Moreton Hall Travel, set up originally in conjunction with the Ffestiniog Railway in Porthmadoc as a rail booking agency in the corner of the geography room. Both these initiatives were way ahead of their time and provided girls with hands-on experience of 'enterprise' long before the



*Lord Digby Jones*

word even appeared on the National Curriculum, or became the focus for many of the 'Enterprise Academies' we see today.

In December 1992, British Rail closed the booking office at Gobowen station. At the time, rail privatisation was a hot political issue; for the girls, what happened next built naturally on the success of ten years of Moreton Travel and Moreton Enterprises businesses at school. Managing a railway station provided a real benefit to the local community which also got



*Moreton Hall Business Lunch.*

## Learning at every level

whole-heartedly involved. It afforded Moretonians experiences which were to amaze university and job interviewers.

Over 300 people attended the annual business lunch this year, which was once again generously sponsored by Investec. The event opened with a brief business review by three impressively confident and knowledgeable members of Moreton Enterprises, who explained how they learned to run the company, take risks and work as a team. Another focus was on Moreton Connect, a new initiative offering old and current Moretonians a supply of contacts in various businesses, covering a diverse range of jobs and potential work experience opportunities.

Moreton Hall's annual Business Lunch took place on Monday, 16th March, and was a huge success, with approximately 300 business men and women dining at 26 tables hosted by Moreton girls. The atmosphere was bubbly and energetic and the food was fantastic. Common conversation topics ranged from the usual "so what kind of

business to you own?" to an overheard "where is your favorite fishing spot?" – a diverse range!

At the end of a relaxing yet rewarding lunch, Lord Digby Jones summed up the day by reiterating how impressed he was with the way in which the Moreton girls were running their Moreton Enterprises business and the levels of both commitment and business acumen that were clearly displayed by them. He has an impressive background: chairman of Triumph Motorcycles, non-executive deputy chairman of UEP, chairman of Grove Industries, corporate ambassador to JCB, and non-executive Director of Leicester Tigers plc are just some of the many roles on his résumé. His amusing, engaging and forthright speech considered what makes Britain – and particularly British business – great, and the challenges we will have to face head-on if we are to stay that way.

*Rachel Knapton is a sixth former (Y12) at Moreton Hall.*

# ALYS in Wonderland

Most trainees on the HMC Teacher Training programme will undertake their PGCE with QTS course with the University of Buckingham, whose original Independent Postgraduate Certificate of Education was developed in close consultation with HMC. With the aid of the latest technology, Ewart Home, C&CR's occasional roving reporter, sought out Geraint Jones, the Dean of the Education School, to learn more.

I thought I was heading to the small market town of Buckingham, where the country's only private university with a royal charter resides, but the satnav surprisingly took me through Buckingham, past the grandeur of Stowe and towards the home of British motor racing – Silverstone. To the rear of the mighty race-track and nestled within 200 acres of the most beautiful countryside is Whittlebury Hall, a five-star hotel and spa with a purpose built conference and training centre and a 36-hole championship golf course!

Surely not, I thought, so I parked and wandered into the luxurious lobby to ask for directions out of the estate towards the University of Buckingham's School of Education. "Right this way, sir", said the receptionist, and I was ushered to a 50-foot lounge, and invited to wait on a majestic sofa in front of a roaring open-fire. A tray of tea promptly arrived (I politely declined 'something stronger') and I found myself grinning hypnotically, in peace, entranced by the burning logs.

A deep south-Walian accent interrupted me, "Good morning, Ewart!" and with a very proud, knowing smile followed, "Welcome to the University of Buckingham!" A cheeky laugh, a rugby-player's handshake and, adding a log to the fire, Geraint Jones, the University's Dean of Education, seemed very much at home at Whittlebury Hall.

"We've taken over the left wing of the hotel!" he beamed. 'We' referred to the entire School of Education, which, as his first major act since taking the deanship in September 2014, Geraint promptly up-rooted to its new dwelling.

"With over 400 PGCE trainees this year and over 100 school

leaders on our leadership courses, we had simply outgrown our old home on the University campus. Next year we will be delivering the PGCE with QTS as part of HMC's new Teacher Training Programme and so will likely grow further. Here we have access to a 650-seater auditorium and over 100 additional training rooms. We now have the capacity to grow in a setting which is fit for purpose, and the spa is nice too!"

I asked how the rest of the University felt about his move. Moving their largest school off the campus can't have been popular. "The case for moving to Whittlebury was a strong one, and the other Deans could see that," Geraint said. "In order for us to handle the growth in trainees and continue to improve what we do, we had to move. I just bit the bullet rather than wait."

The success of Buckingham's School of Education, since its inception a decade ago by former Chief Inspector of Schools Sir Chris Woodhead and Professor Anthony O'Hear, is unprecedented. The first teacher training course consisted of only 12 trainee teachers.

"I work closely with Chris and Anthony", Geraint added. "Neither is shy in telling me what they think! I've known Chris since he appointed me to the Headship of one of his schools when he was chairman of Cognita. I must have done something right because he then appointed me to be the company's Director of Education."

But Geraint is quick to point out that he does things his way. "I heard a consultant surgeon once say that nobody could manage her as well as she could manage herself. I am no different and I would be surprised if most good Headteachers don't think in the same way. Chris's counsel is, however, very important to me. I can be over-sensitive and impatient – Chris reins me in!"

Geraint's impatience, though, seems not to be doing the University much harm.

"One of my bugbears as a teacher and then a Head was attending training courses, remembering the lunch and not

much else. If we expect teachers and school leaders, who are busy people, to come out of their schools to spend time with us, then they deserve to learn something valuable, which they would have been unlikely to learn in their schools or by visiting another school.

“We therefore have a responsibility to share, in Matthew Arnold’s words, ‘the best that has been thought and known’ about teaching and school leadership. We must ensure that our course content is pertinent to teachers’ and leaders’ everyday lives and that they have access to materials and speakers that will help them to be better at what they do. The fact that Whittlebury’s facilities are lovely then becomes an added value.”

I ask about the University’s private status and how this benefits trainee teachers. “I feel that the independent education sector still has to justify itself against criticism and doctrinaire opposition. A few months ago, for example, I was asked to comment on Professor Graham Donaldson’s review of the National Curriculum in Wales, and I criticised it, saying that its implementation would further widen the gap between education in Wales and England. The Welsh Assembly didn’t like what I said, and it was discounted as the ignorant view of the private sector.

“I believe that the strength of the independent school sector is that we can speak the truth, without fear or favour. Whether it’s about what constitutes good teaching or what is in a child’s best interest, ‘independence’ from the state allows us to cut through the rhetoric and political correctness which muddies education, and make decisions based on what we believe is the right thing to do.

“Ten years ago I was vilified for saying that ‘knowing pupils’ preferred learning styles’ was a fad which had no impact in improving teaching and pupils’ learning. The most recent research now agrees with me, and those who were spouting the party line then are now distancing themselves from those learning styles and earning their money consulting on the most recent initiative, which is probably a re-branded version of learning styles.

“Why is it that the truth is seen by so many as controversial? The cynic in me believes that if the truth about what constitutes a good school or good teaching was to out, then too many people in local authorities, teacher training or the civil service would lose their jobs, because they would simply not be needed.”

So what constitutes good teaching, I ask.

“First, a good teacher is an authority in his/her subject and their effectiveness as a teacher depends upon the knowledge they have of their subject and their passion for it. They must have the ability to explain ideas in a way that engages their pupils, to ask questions and respond to answers in a way that prompts children’s thought and interest, to maintain good discipline and to have the highest possible expectations of their children. There is no one way to teach, so we want to open our teachers’ eyes to a variety of methods rather than to impose in a doctrinaire fashion any particular approach.”

It is difficult to argue with such simplistic truths about teaching and education, and I found myself day-dreaming about starting a teaching career again under the tutelage of such common sense. I asked Geraint a final question of his own PGCE experience and how that, if at all, plays a part in his current role.



*Geraint Jones*

“I suffered a PGCE in modern foreign languages, when languages teachers were being trained how to dance around a room with flashcards and props promulgating ‘the communicative language approach’. I remember failing an essay because I argued that German was best taught through an appreciation of its formulaic grammatical structure. My university tutor, from memory, was a fan of learning styles too!”

I was bade farewell by one final warm smile, and got a lasting impression that independence, in whatever sector or guise, requires only one person to be courageous enough to tell the truth. It would seem that Woodhead’s protégé has been well groomed in that.

*Geraint Jones is the Dean of Education at the University of Buckingham. He has been a school leader in the independent and maintained sectors and is the founder of Wake and Shake, a programme of physical education for pupils. He is a keen supporter of the Welsh Rugby team.*

# Reducing Shakespeare

Matthew Jenkinson describes a new approach to performing his plays



Matthew Jenkinson

Shakespeare is back. Not that he ever went away, clearly. But he is back on the Key Stage 3 radar, with the new National Curriculum requiring all pupils between 11 and 14 to study two Shakespeare plays in full. This added rigour has won plaudits from some areas, but not all. Dr Tim Hands, Master of Magdalen College School, has argued that too much Shakespeare, too early, will put pupils off Shakespeare for life. It will, Hands claims, ‘hold back pupils, not liberate them’.

As with any topic in any subject, the extent to which pupils will be put off or held back depends on the way these plays are taught. Or it could be argued that Shakespeare’s genius will transcend the mangling they are given through bad teaching.

I vividly remember reading *Romeo and Juliet* at the age of 13, even though my teacher was not blessed in the inspiration department. But what debates about the new National Curriculum requirements rarely countenance, oddly, is the value of *performing* Shakespeare. I suspect that most of us imagine unwilling pupils sitting at their desks, each being given a role – “Freddy, you be third servingman!” – and killing Shakespeare’s language with a deadening adolescent inflection.

Before the nation’s armchair educational commentators start shaking their *Telegraphs* or *Guardians*, sneering that Key Stage 3 pupils are too young to perform Shakespeare plays, I will beg to differ. Indeed, as with many of my colleagues around the country – and one hopes the world – each autumn I direct a Shakespeare play that remains true to the original language.

As far as I have noticed, these plays have not yet put anyone off Shakespeare for life, nor held them back. Quite the opposite: abridged and produced in the correct way, Shakespeare plays can be ‘differentiated’ to allow pupils to access them at many different levels.

I should clarify that we do not perform *complete* plays. The logistics of trying to get a cast of 11 to 13 year-olds to learn three hours’ worth of lines are boggling, especially when they are also trying to do their classwork and homework, play football, practise the French horn, and surf YouTube.

Our performances tend to be about an hour in length, with the original text abridged to preserve the overall plot and principal characters. This ‘reduced Shakespeare’ has little in common with the Reduced Shakespeare Company’s excellent stage show, aside from an appreciation that Shakespeare plays can be distilled without corrupting their essence.

It appears that such an approach has some high-profile supporters. Simon Russell Beale, who has just become Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre at the University of Oxford, argues that Shakespeare is ‘big enough’ to survive some editing. “You can do what you like with it,” he says, “as long as you make coherent, emotional sense.” Deborah Warner, former director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and twice-recipient of a Laurence Olivier Award, has argued that ‘you must cut to create new work’.

Three of these abridged Shakespeare plays are being published by John Catt in 2015: *Hour-Long Shakespeare* features performance texts of three of Shakespeare’s greatest ‘History’ plays: *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Henry V*; and *Richard III*. It is not a book for purists, nor for those seeking a study text. It is, instead, for those who wish to perform (or read) a Shakespeare play, but do not have the time or resources to stage (or read) a full-length version.

Naturally, cutting out almost two-thirds of each original play means that many speeches are shorter than in the original, some sections of plot have been removed, and whole characters sometimes have been excised altogether. But the integrity of Shakespeare’s original language has been preserved.

The lines are, in general, as printed in the first folio of 1623, with, where appropriate, some modernized spellings, and capitals replaced with lowercase letters. The words of the original plays have not been changed; there are just fewer of them.

The casting of the plays has been engineered for the greatest flexibility. There are usually approximately 20 named parts,

each with different levels of difficulty. If someone wishes to be involved in a Shakespeare production, but is not confident about learning lots of lines or being on the stage for too long, there is a part for them.

Equally, if someone wishes to take on a much larger role like Henry V or Richard III, there is a part for them too. And, of course, there are plenty of medium-engagement roles for those in the middle.

The Chorus device is used throughout the plays. While Shakespeare wrote a Chorus part for *Henry V*, this same narrator-style method has also been adopted in *Hour-Long Shakespeare* for *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Richard III*. This enables the Chorus to provide excerpts from otherwise-excised sections of the plays, or to provide a commentary on the unfolding drama.

The Chorus device also aids flexibility in casting. It is possible to have just one individual narrating the Chorus part, or several actors can take the Chorus lines in turn. When these hour-long versions were originally staged, between 15 and 20 Chorus members were used, sitting behind the audience 'in the round', taking each line in turn around a giant circle.

More information about *Hour-Long Shakespeare* can be obtained from John Catt Educational Ltd at [www.johncattbookshop.com](http://www.johncattbookshop.com)

In addition to enhancing the atmosphere of the performance, this also enables the Chorus to have the script in front of them, catering for those who wish to engage with Shakespeare's language and the production as a whole, but who do not yet feel confident enough to learn lines or perform on the main stage.

There is also great flexibility in the age range of those who can be involved in the hour-long productions. The original cast members were between 11 and 13 years old. They demonstrated that this age group really can engage with, act in, and enjoy, Shakespeare's plays. While it would probably be rare for younger children to attempt these edited versions, there is of course no upper age limit.

One of the best ways to learn about Shakespeare is to perform one of his plays. Even if you only have a couple of lines, you become immersed in the language and begin to encounter and understand core themes and plots. These scripts will hopefully help in that learning process, genuinely liberating them through manageable exposure to Shakespeare's language.

*Matthew Jenkinson is director of studies at New College School, Oxford.*





Cathy Taylor

# An imagined Englishness

In the second of two articles, Dr Cathy Taylor continues her survey of the boarding school genre of fiction, focusing on the 'Harry Potter' effect

Readers have clearly wanted to access the experience of children sent away from home well before the Harry Potter phenomenon. So why has the Harry Potter series made such an impact on a new generation of school children despite literary precedent?

The answer possibly lies in what Andrew Blake, in a fascinating essay in *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, describes as the need to find a 'form of insulation against modernity'.<sup>1</sup> Fiction in the 1980s and early 1990s set out to represent the reality of housing estate poverty, teenage angst and dark social issues. When Harry Potter entered the literary arena in 1997, J K Rowling demonstrated that the past could be employed to modernize historical tradition.

Blake maintains that one of England's most consistent cultural exports is its fiction, thereby endorsing fiction as a 'global commodity'.<sup>2</sup> He claims that Harry Potter was responsible in many ways for 'rebranding Britain'. In the context of this discussion it is worth reflecting on the dilemma faced by Rowling's literary agent Christopher Little, who, while he accepted the now iconic manuscript, considered the political incorrectness of the book's main premise of sending your child away to school as potentially 'commercially risky'.<sup>3</sup>

Harry Potter however had tapped into a prevailing demand for a past which could accommodate a particular type of fantasy and cultural nostalgia. According to Blake, most of us 'ache for the past' while demanding all the convenience 'the new age can afford us'. In simple terms, Blake believes we either remodel the old in order to incorporate the new or represent the new in a more traditional light; Harry Potter would seem to encapsulate both these attitudes.<sup>4</sup>

J K Rowling instinctively recognised that both adult and young readers were ready to re-engage with history. Her books have become representative of a specific literary moment. The interest in the past which emerged in the 1990s, partly as a result of new found wealth, encouraged a new generation to 'reinvent the past for present day consumer culture, and to sell it'.

Blake defines this reinvention aptly; 'the imperial past and the multicultural present take an imagined Englishness in different directions. They offer a potential, at least, for a cultural definition of a nation that is ethnically inclusive, globally connected and aware of the present'. Harry Potter is part of this political and cultural world. 'Harry is English – indeed he is a Home Counties' suburban child ... Hogwarts represents a multicultural, contemporary England...'<sup>5</sup>

A multicultural, contemporary environment is what most British boarding schools would aspire to today. In the same chapter, Blake suggests that all the Harry Potter books are making a statement about how we regard 'childhood, adulthood and the family; about the relationship between education and work; and about questions of good and evil, personal and collective responsibility'.<sup>6</sup>

A close study of the British boarding school genre reveals a darkness in the plot and themes and Harry Potter is no exception. J K Rowling is quite clear that her novels are essentially about death, 'My books are largely about death ... we're all frightened of it'.<sup>7</sup> In a world reeling from economic recession, increasing insecurities about the safety of our children and reports about failing educational standards, the idea of the boarding school becomes all too enticing.

Stability, self confidence, responsibility, self-motivation, respect for others, common values, the provision of extra-curricular opportunities in one location, the right conditions for the completion of homework without family stress and the idea of the boarding school experience as 'one long sleep over' are clearly increasingly sought after.

There is consensus that J K Rowling's Harry Potter series has done more to promote the positive characteristics of the British boarding school than 'anyone could have imagined'.<sup>8</sup> Since the appearance of the first book in the series in 1997, there has been a surge in boarding school enrolments, reversing a ten-year decline in 'take-up'. The story of an orphan assigned to a specific quest combined with the daily experiences associated with the public school, Hogwarts

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offers a world defined by moral and physical conflicts, loyalty, intense friendships and destiny and appears to have caught the attention of a new school generation.

'First buyer syndrome', where students themselves opt to experience boarding school education despite the absence of familial or cultural tradition, may be explained not only by what is known as the Harry Potter effect but also by a new generation's quest for smaller class sizes, traditional values and the associations with the 'good habits' historically associated with the myopia of a distant era of Empire.

The BBC documentary, *A Very English Education*<sup>9</sup> (a sequel to a programme on Radley first televised in 1997, the same year that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was published), which follows the life of public schoolboys from Radley College from their school experience into adulthood, opens with Radley's Warden explaining why his pupils have come to the school and what he expects from them. Looking someone in the eye, good manners, a smart appearance: good academic working habits once acquired, we are told, are 'established for life'.

Past pupils explain that one of the reasons for attending a school like Radley is the result of 'what you did' if you came from a particular social milieu. The English public school is frequently associated with what it is to be *quintessentially English* rather than British and is no longer defined by outmoded ideas of class and family tradition. The Warden's mantra, 'You come to school for one thing, to acquire the right habits for life', is still valued today, but the opportunity to acquire these values is currently more accessible to a wider group of families than ever before in the history of public schools.

While the Harry Potter series epitomises the features of a long and distinguished line of public school stories, Rowling's reinvention of the public school ethos makes it somehow more democratic. There is clearly reference to a class system at Hogwarts but there is also a new inclusivity which allows the ordinariness of Neville Longbottom to appear as attractive to the reader as the hero Harry Potter.

Importantly, Hermione Granger not only represents the coeducational community of the modern boarding school tradition, but she is also academic and astute. Hermione is given equality in the dangerous quests and exploits the group of close friends undertake. Hermione's voice is as clear and authoritative as the boys'.

Rowling's characters are responsible for unifying the long-standing tradition of 1000 years of monastic education with witchcraft, wizardry and adventure. Blake, again, suggests that Harry Potter's extraordinary success might be explained by Rowling's sensitivity to an idea of a 'past-in-future England'. Using the past as reference for improving the future, 'Harry Potter isn't just part of a museum culture, he is a revolutionary, a symbolic figure of the past-in-future England which is in desperate need of such symbols'.<sup>10</sup>

Can the current enthusiasm for boarding school life be simply explained by the popularity of fiction? Nick Ward observes that boarding schools are great locations in which to be educated, but he also believes there is more than magic and wizardry behind the continuing growth in enthusiasm for boarding as a means of educating young people. 'It takes more than a young boy being a wizard to make up someone's mind, but one thing the books have done is to promote to children that boarding schools can be exciting places'.<sup>11</sup>

What seems clear is that for an increasing number of British and international families, boarding school experience is able to offer something the ordinary day school cannot appear to match. Sue Learner, in her article *Why Send Your Child To Independent School?*<sup>12</sup> suggests that academic benefits are not the only reason parents 'go independent'. Important life lessons in combating racism, marginalisation and injustice are just a few of the values instilled in students if they choose to board.

Statistics released on the website of the British Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) reveal that 12,802 non-British students are currently attending British boarding schools and 60% of our schools offer some form of boarding facility. In Billy Bunter's day at Greyfriars School, the presence of an international boarder in the school community was rare.

Charles Hamilton's unique creation, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh is perhaps best remembered for his idiosyncratic English phraseology ('the perhapfulness will be terrific!'). Singh's fusion of the language of a public school forged by the image of Empire is tempered by initiative and a willingness to be part of a valued cultural tradition. Today, overseas students can 'make up anything from 15% to 40% of a British boarding school's population'. An article in *The Telegraph Weekend*, Sunday, 15th June 2013, quotes figures taken from the Independent Schools Council, indicating that of the 64, 476 boarders in its member schools in 2012, some 26, 376 were non-British with parents living abroad.<sup>13</sup>

While the J K Rowling series has sold more than 450 million copies and has been translated into Ukrainian, Arabic, Urdu, Vietnamese and Azerbaijani to name but a few, can the uptake in boarding by overseas students also be explained by the Harry Potter effect alone? Harry Potter is one in a long line of fiction which can claim to belong to what is generally described as the boarding school genre. There may be more of a relationship between Rowling's themes and her plots and the long line of historical boarding school fiction than first meets the eye.

### Footnotes

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2. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and The Reinvention of The Past', p.305.
3. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and The Reinvention of The Past', p. 305.
4. 'Harry Potter and The Reinvention of The Past', p. 305.
5. 'Harry Potter and The Reinvention of The Past', p. 305.
6. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and the Reinvention of the Past', p. 305.
7. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and the Reinvention of the Past', p. 309.
8. Williamson, Ann, Campaign Director of the BEA.
9. BBC Two, *A Very English Education*, Sunday 27th October, 2013.
10. Blake, Andrew, 'Harry Potter and The Reinvention of The Past', p.308.
11. www.crchealth.com/youth programme boarding schools (accessed October 2013).
12. Learner, Sue, *Why Send Your Child To Independent School?*, Daily Telegraph, 20th November 2013.
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*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.*

# Local heroes



What makes a 'local hero'? Gifted and Talented pupils from Kingswood School, Bath spent a term researching this question before creatively recording their answer in book form. At the outset, the Year 7 and Year 8 pupils worked collaboratively to define their criteria, both for general and local heroes. They decided that individuals must have resided, or be residing in, Bath and should have demonstrated or be demonstrating inspiration, lasting achievement, determination and inventiveness.

With the valued assistance of our school librarian, pupils were then introduced to a range of research sources and drew up a final list of 21 heroes. Pupils produced a brief biographical sketch for each. Given the Gifted and Talented context, we sought to engage pupils' higher-level skills by asking for a creative response to each of the heroes within their biographies.

Examples of this included a limerick and Plasticine figures, inspired by the inventor of Plasticine, William Harbutt, who was one of the selected heroes. Pupils enthusiastically debated the appropriate sequencing of the heroes in the book, choosing alphabetical order as the least contentious option.

We ran this activity successfully over two terms, in weekly one-hour sessions within the whole school extra-curricular activity programme. Our initial planning suggested that our immediate locality provided an extensive selection of heroes waiting to be discovered. We noted that throughout the activity, pupils developed and honed important skills in research, debating, prioritization, presentation, creativity and team work, whilst also learning more about the history of their local community.

Thus the participants demonstrated gifted behaviour according to Renzulli's *Three Ring Model* (Renzulli 2005), as creativity, task-commitment and above average ability were all needed to produce a completed contribution to the book on schedule. At the end of the summer term, pupils enjoyed a guided pilgrimage to local sites associated with some of the heroes, before a book launch to which governors and senior staff were invited.

Particularly valuable were the cross-curricular links achieved through the heroes' narratives, spanning the varied disciplines of history, English, science, art, and music. Colleagues and older pupils were also drawn into the project, performing music composed by one of the heroes, the astronomer William Herschel, and delivering a seminar on the Classical concept of heroism.

Our Heroes of Bath project, with its eclectic selection of heroes past and present, succeeded in its aim of providing inspiration to participants and other members of our school community. Suitably adapted, it could easily be transferred to other settings: who knows which local heroes are waiting to be discovered by your pupils?

*Dr Matthew Fletcher is head of chemistry at Kingswood School, Bath.*

## References

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# ‘A damned nice thing...’

## And a defining moment in European history

Teachers and school pupils from all over Greater London visited the House of Commons to attend *An Audience with Dan Snow* on Wednesday, 4th March, eager to learn more about the Battle of Waterloo and the 2015 bicentenary commemorations.

There was a fantastic response to the event with schools quick to take up the limited seats available. Many schools even ran competitions for students to win a place, demonstrating the very high level of interest and enthusiasm amongst young people.

“This has been a wonderful opportunity for London schools to understand more about this significant battle, to learn about how they can become involved in the commemorations and be the first to hear of TIMELINE 200, a unique national schools’ competition, of which I am a judge. It will cover not only history, but nature, art, sport and the science sectors of the school curriculum, and is being launched on 20th March, at the start of the Hundred Days of Napoleon,” Dan Snow said.

Amongst the other speakers were members of Waterloo 200, including Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter KCV OBE DL, its chairman; Peter Warwick, chairman of the New Waterloo Dispatch; and Commander Nicholas Chatwin of the Royal Navy.

In General Webb-Carter’s words, “Waterloo represents a pivotal moment in European history for us all. During this 200th anniversary we have a fantastic opportunity to keep this rich history alive for the next generation and beyond. We have been delighted by such an enthusiastic response from schools and from pupils of all ages. We are dedicated to supporting students and teachers across the country. Via our website, you can also browse our extensive array of educational resources which are free to download for classroom use.”

Those attending were able to be the first to learn about the New Waterloo Dispatch, a ceremonial interpretation of how the news was delivered 200 years ago, and were extremely excited to hear how they can also become involved through visual arts and costume with the assistance of Radiator Arts and Hungry for History.

The New Waterloo Dispatch is looking for 50+ schools to create between them a total of 200 enormous *papier-mâché* heads of characters from the Napoleonic Wars. These could be the commanders and leaders or soldiers from the many European armies, their horses, camp followers, *etc.* Schools undertaking this challenge would take part in a parade in Regent Street and the Mall on 21st June.

Waterloo 200, in partnership with Hungry for History, is seeking to challenge schoolchildren from across the UK to determine their 100 ‘Defining Moments’ in the history of the last 200 years, from 1815-2015. This is a special opportunity for the younger generation to express their ideas nationally and to leave their own legacy for future generations during these commemorations.

TIMELINE 200 is looking to appeal to teachers and pupils across the curriculum. Individuals, teams or schools can enter

as many Moments as they wish. The winning Moments will be announced during the Autumn Term in 2015 and entered into a national Hall of Fame. Each Moment will also be produced as a certificate, signed by the judges and presented to each winning school.

A distinguished judging panel will decide on the winning 100 Defining Moments with 20 chosen from each of the five categories and with equal representation from each age group. The judges are Dan Snow, historian, writer and presenter; Mike Diaper OBE, executive director, Community Sport, Sport England; Sir Anthony Seldon, Master of Wellington College, contemporary historian, commentator and political author; Dr Sabine Clark, president of the British Science Association’s history of science section; Professor Ian Swingland OBE PhD DSc, founder of The Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology; Alex Hirtzel, multi-disciplined artist & art historian; and Christina Nash of Radiator Arts.

Categories: history, nature, art, sport and science/  
technology

Age groups: 7-10, 11-13, 14-16, 17-18

Timing: the competition opened on Friday, 20th March,  
and closes on Wednesday, 8th July, 2015.

Waterloo 200 is an umbrella organisation approved and supported by government to oversee the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Granted charitable status in 2009 it is planning and co-coordinating

*One of two French  
Eagle Standards  
captured at  
Waterloo.*





*Royal Scots Greys at Waterloo.*

the main events and pursuing an educational programme that is also seeking to create a living legacy.

The New Waterloo Dispatch is a ceremonial interpretation of the news of Waterloo reaching various European cities. It comprises a new Dispatch for 2015, to be presented to senior members of the Royal Family, European VIPs and other public dignitaries during many ceremonies, involving a horse-drawn post chaise along the routes used by the official messengers to deliver the historic dispatches from the Waterloo battlefield to Brussels, London, Berlin and Paris.

Significant occasions are being organised in Belgium, Germany and the UK; there will be services in St Paul's and Canterbury Cathedrals; a parade in Regent Street involving 11 visiting military bands from Europe; a Regency Fair and Waterloo Music Festival in St James's Square; and the Royal Navy hosting a flight deck reception aboard HMS *Iron Duke* at Ostend for European public figures and NATO VIPs.

[www.waterloo200.org](http://www.waterloo200.org)  
[@Waterloo200org](https://twitter.com/Waterloo200org) [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

### About Hungry for History

Hungry for History is a national schools commemorative campaign designed to instill a love of history in children and to encourage the sharing of ideas and the forging of stronger links between schools. The campaign takes its inspiration from the major anniversaries of World War I, World War II and the Battle of Waterloo amongst others.

With the emphasis on commemoration and reflection at this unique time, it aims to bring history alive, inspire the young generation of today to leave their own legacy, and encourage a renewed appetite for the subject. Hungry for History is a supporting partner of Waterloo 200 and educational advisor for the New Waterloo Dispatch. The founder of Hungry for History is Wellesley House School in Broadstairs, which is the town that sees the start of the New Waterloo Dispatch ceremonial interpretation in June 2015.

[www.hungryforhistory.info](http://www.hungryforhistory.info)  
[twitter.com/HforH](https://twitter.com/HforH)



## In the Library

on through 1916-18, were, as often as not, the inexperienced junior officers who had been at school a matter of months earlier and had a life expectancy at the front measured in weeks. At different points in the book all of these options are exercised and that makes it quite difficult to keep on top of things.

Marc Noble left Eton in April 1915. As the grandson of Andrew Noble, partner to William Armstrong, whose company supplied the War Office with a significant proportion of the guns and munitions needed, it was perhaps appropriate that he was commissioned into the Royal Artillery. We are given various anecdotes about his childhood, and that he was in Samuel Lubbock's house for five years, 'a fabled abode of notable personages that would include Prince Henry'.

Noble first saw action at Mametz Wood in July 1916 [pp199-202], but then the story shifts to Billy Congreve, under the command of his father, General Walter Congreve VC, and himself awarded the VC posthumously after the action at Delville Wood. After that a chapter shifts the focus to the Guards Division and the later stages on the Somme, using the private papers of Henry Dundas, and touching upon Harold Macmillan (including the well known episode in a shell-hole reading Aeschylus) and Oliver Lyttelton in the process.

The details take over and a succession of encounters with OEs, preponderantly in the Guards, is documented. A particularly gruesome episode describes the death of Dormer Treffry OE, quickly followed by that of Guy Baring OE. As the first is identified only as a 39 year-old Cornish subaltern,

and the second was a Lieutenant Colonel commanding the 1st Coldstream Guards, it would have been of interest to learn a little more about both these somewhat atypical Etonian participants in the Battle of the Somme.

The notes to this chapter reveal nothing further, though there we are told also that William Herbert Gladstone, grandson of the GOM, who 'had rowed with the VIII as late as 1916' was killed serving with the Coldstream Guards in 1918. But the story then veers off in pursuit of Eric Lubbock and other more individualistic OEs who served with the RFC, and there is a section devoted to the 4th June dinner at St Omer in 1917. Some public school traditions seemed immune to wartime exigencies. Suddenly Marc Noble reappears, to be cut down by shelling at Messines [pp274-76]. The index is invaluable here.

Away from the Western Front, the chapters on 'sideshows', Gallipoli and the defence of the Suez Canal, benefit from being handled as complete episodes. A consequence of having over 5000 stories from which to select is that the choice is almost limitless. One might quibble over the quite lengthy description of the sinking of the *Lusitania* which occurs in the book just after we have dealt with the halting of Ludendorff's Spring Offensive in 1918.

The Eton connections here are slightly tenuous: Cecil Spring Rice OE was ambassador to the United States at the time and had to deal with the anonymous intelligence that indicated the *Lusitania* was a target for U boats; Audley Drake OE was one of the 1201 who drowned. He was an electrical



engineer living in Detroit and ‘the time had come to return home and contribute to the war effort’, an unsupported assertion along with the information that ‘there was plenty to keep Audley occupied in first class, including the opulent gold-and-white lounge with its stained glass ceiling’.

The same amount of space is given to the Battle of Jutland, actually rather well described by the author, and the sinking of the battle cruiser HMS *Invincible*, in which served Midshipman Charlie Acland-Hood, ‘the only OE lost at sea with the Royal Navy in the Great War’. But arguably one of the best stories in the book, Geoffrey Drummond’s winning of the VC for his part in the second attempt to blockade Ostend in 1918, gets pushed through quite expeditiously, though there is space given to the fact of his cousin being Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

Two of the leads followed that are of particular interest serve to emphasise the ubiquity of Etonians, and take the story to the Eastern Front. George Schack-Sommer was working as a mining engineer in Siberia and had put himself forward for Scott’s expedition though he had lost out in the selection to Lawrence Oates [OE in fact, though we are not told].

Schack-Sommer decided the war might be over before he could get back to England, so, using contacts which disappointingly did not involve Eton, he joined the 12th Artirsky Hussars as a trooper and was involved in a number of engagements that are well presented here, until he was killed in action in 1915 in the Carpathians. Bruno von Schroder had the distinction of being the sole OE to fight for the Kaiser. Like Schack-Sommer, he was a cavalryman and served in the Parchim Dragoons. He went missing in a retreat in 1915 whilst fighting the Russians in the Minsk region, and he is missing too from E L Vaughan’s *List*.

One theme that will interest all readers concerns the impact of the war as it unfolded on this particular community. Unsurprisingly, for many of those whose stories are selected, their most vivid experiences prior to war service were at school. As the chronology develops this becomes more apparent and affects the style of the writing.

Early chapters reflect the breeziness of the initial phase and much of the reported action concerns cavalry units in retreat with frequent reference to Eton v Harrow at Lord’s. With Ypres the tone becomes more sombre and after the Somme and Passchendaele fatalistic, perhaps reflecting the view that this stalemate could go on for ever. Thus it was no surprise that those involved increasingly thought back to the golden era of schooldays, reinforced by returning to Eton on those rare occasions when on leave.

Though the author chooses not to engage with analysis of the Boys of Eton College and the First World War as a



*Rifle volunteers at Bisley.*

complete group and does not pick up threads in relation to the differences between volunteering and being conscripted, the final chapter on the Armistice develops the theme of cost and lost potential, using the particular example of Harry Moseley, killed at Gallipoli.

Widely regarded as the most promising British physicist of his generation, his loss was felt by both the German as well as the British scientific world; Ernest Rutherford is reported to have said that ‘to use such a man as a subaltern was the equivalent of using the *Lusitania* to carry a pound of butter from Ramsgate to Margate’.

There is certainly much of interest in *Blood and Thunder*, despite the challenges that are presented in keeping track of what is happening. Judicious editing might have addressed some of the shortcomings, and there are a good many disturbing misprints, though by the time we reach the Christmas truce at least the one that rendered football as ftball had been picked up.

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***Blood & Thunder***  
***The Boys of Eton College and the First World War***  
 by Alexandra Churchill; The History Press 2014  
 ISBN 9780752490038



*Withington Girls School. Photo by Sandra Dalton.*

# Towards the Light

## Withington Girls' School celebrates 125 years

Withington Girls' School is celebrating its 125th anniversary with, amongst other things, a handsome 'portrait' book produced by Third Millennium. The book is the work of a team of 33 present and former staff, Heads, governors and friends of the school, co-ordinated by the current Headmistress, Sue Marks, the tenth to hold the post.

As with all Third Millennium books about academic institutions, *Towards the Light* is handsomely presented, copiously and attractively illustrated, with readable articles and a clear purpose, thoroughly fulfilled.

Although this is a portrait and not a history, there is no shortage of information about the school's origins and early years. Started with a school roll of four and overseen by four Headmistresses between 1890 and 1908, Withington's trajectory was, nevertheless, always upwards. In a contrast to the early years, there were only four Headmistresses from 1908 to 2000, a quartet of formidable, talented and clearly differentiated women. They remained true to the school's somewhat unusual founding principles, wisely supported by successive chairs of governors.

The great day of the year is Founders' Day, introduced by Miss Bain in 1946. In most schools, the annual focus is on a Prizegiving, but there are no prizes in a school that is, nevertheless, amongst the most academically successful in the

country. Many schools measure success by increased numbers, but Withington's founders made it clear that the school should never get too large. From the beginning, science, manual training and outdoor games were key elements in preparing girls for higher education and the work of life. It is clear that the founders were no ordinary people and therein lies much of the appeal of this book and the story of this school.

The second half of the 19th century saw a remarkable surge in education for women. It is not easy to identify precisely where and when this started, but as good a place as any might be the offices of the *English Woman's Journal* in Langham Place, London. Here a group of friends met to discuss a wide variety of issues, including the paucity of educational opportunities for girls and women.

Queen's College Harley Street, founded in 1849, initially aimed to improve the educational standards of governesses, but it extended its remit to girls in 1853. Frances Mary Buss, founder of North London Collegiate School (1850) and Dorothea Beale, Headmistress of the Cheltenham Ladies College from 1858, were both *alumnae*.

Central to the Langham Place Group were Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes, both members of Unitarian families. The Unitarian movement was a major force in social reform and progressive thinking, and was strongly

represented in Manchester. William Gaskell was the minister at Cross Street Unitarian Chapel and his wife Elizabeth was established as a major literary force by 1850. Her mother was related to the Darwins and the Wedgwoods, leading Unitarian families, and Elizabeth was the centre of a powerful circle of friends, including Charles Halle.

In 1873, W H Herford, who had trained to be a Unitarian minister, founded a 'progressive' preparatory school in Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, soon moving it to Lady Barn House, Withington, which gave the school not only new premises but also its new name. C P Scott, editor and later owner of the *Manchester Guardian*, sent all his children to the school, which was also attended by 15 of his grandchildren. Other families were equally interested in progressive education and were especially keen to see their daughters given the same opportunities as boys and this is what led to plans for a new school.

Withington Girls' School is a true daughter of Manchester. It is hard to think of another English city that could have inspired, founded and maintained such a progressive and productive school. It would not do to describe WGS as 'high-ranking' because one of the school's guiding principles has been to eschew tuft-hunting. The annual and high-minded evocation of the Founders in place of the meretricious Prizegiving, is made doubly understandable when one learns more about them.

The founders were leading citizens of a place that was genuinely ahead of its time. As well as C P Scott, they included A W Ward, twice Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Victoria University; Henry Simon, a leading industrialist, and his wife Emily; Caroline Herford, now Head of Lady Barn House; and finally Caroline Lejeune, who succeeded Caroline Herford as school secretary.

Henry Simon, born in Prussia, educated in Zurich and equipped with nothing more than his diploma and huge talent, arrived in Manchester in 1860 and became one of the city's leading industrialists. The firm he founded flourishes to this day as Simon Carves Engineering Ltd, but his legacy to Manchester was also cultural and academic. A founding member of the Halle Concerts Society, he was responsible for bringing Hans Richter to the orchestra after Halle had died. As a major benefactor of Owens College, in 1898 he opened the physics laboratories where Rutherford and Geiger later worked.

Adolphus Ward, the first chairman of governors, was the Principal of Owens College from 1889 and, later, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. He was soon succeeded as chairman by C P Scott, who was also a trustee of Owens College, and who remained chairman of the WGS board until his death in 1932.

Withington was not the first of the new wave of schools to be founded for girls, nor even the first in Manchester. On 22nd December, 1874, nine Heads met at the home of Miss Buss, Headmistress of North London Collegiate School, including Elizabeth Day, Headmistress of Manchester High School.

Their purpose was to form an Association of Head Mistresses, recognising the fact that girls' schools were becoming increasingly widespread and were clearly there to stay. What is now the Girls Day School Trust, founded in 1872, was represented by Mary Eliza Porter of Chelsea High School, and Harriet Morant Jones of Notting Hill High School. There was only one boarding school Head, Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham Ladies College, and she took the chair.

By the time that Edward Thring invited the Association of Headmistresses to hold their annual conference at his school, Uppingham, on 10th June 1887, numbers had grown considerably. As Thring reported 'fifty-nine actually came and we did all in our power to honour them'. Although the Association had been holding annual conferences since 1877, Thring saw the Uppingham meeting as 'the first official recognition they had had'.

Even in those days, Headmasters had a very particular world-view. 'They were a delightful company, entirely free from all nonsense: not a trace of 'women's rights' amongst them, but most sensible, sober-minded workers and thinkers'. (*Reluctant Revolutionaries*; Glenday and Price; Pitman Publishing; 1974)

Withington girls were not the only ones who needed to be led 'towards the light'.

### Towards the light – A portrait of Withington Girls' School

Third Millennium

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# Linda and the children

## Withington Girls' School remembers Auschwitz 70 years after its liberation

Many alumnae may recall hearing the story of their fellow Withingtonian, Linda Bentata, who was killed along with her children at Auschwitz Concentration Camp during the Second World War. Jackie Mesrie, Linda's niece, spoke in our senior school assembly about the fate of her aunt and cousins, and her family's trip to meet those who had tried to help them. Her speech is reproduced in full below.

'Thank you for inviting me to address you this morning.

I am here to tell you a very moving true story about my aunt, my late father's sister, and her three children, who all perished in the Holocaust.

My aunt, Linda Bentata, attended Withington Girls' School from the ages of 11 to 18. A photo obtained from your archivist shows her in 1915 with the rest of the School. She went on to study at the Northern College. She married in 1924, and went to live in Milan and later Brussels. She had three children: Jacqueline, Janine and Freddy.

Sadly, her husband died very suddenly in 1937 leaving her a young widow. My newly-married parents went to stay with her for six months as she came to terms with her loss, where they became very close to the children and of course to Linda.

Like all of your parents, Linda valued and was concerned

## In the Library



about the children's education and, as the warnings of war began to echo through Europe, her family in Didsbury insisted she return to Manchester. But her eldest daughter, Jacqueline, was taking her Bacalaureat, and when Neville Chamberlain returned from Germany in September 1938 saying there would be peace in our time, Linda and the children returned to Brussels.

With the declaration of war on 3rd September, 1939, Linda fled from Brussels with her children to a seaside town on the north-west coast of France called La Baule. There, on 16th July, 1942, they were all arrested by the Germans and taken to Auschwitz concentration camp, where they were murdered by the Nazis.

My brothers and I, who were being born as our aunt and cousins were dying, also grew up in Didsbury. We knew very little about this story as our parents were too heartbroken to speak of it – there was a silence where a family should have been.

Our father died young, but our mother lived to 95. When she was 90, I had her interviewed and a DVD made of her long life. I expressly asked the interviewer to encourage her to talk about the Holocaust and how it had affected our family.

She spoke very emotionally, often tearfully, about the loss of Linda and the children; how they had received letters and cards which were obviously censored by the Germans, as Linda never wrote of her fears or the dreadful things that must have been happening. The last card my parents received was dated 11th July, 1942 – just five days before they were arrested.

For three years the family heard nothing, but at the end of the war the Red Cross entered the camps and discovered the meticulously kept records of every person that was murdered, including the names of Linda, Jacqueline, Janine and Freddy.

My mother continued, saying that before they were taken, Linda must have realised the danger she was in and entrusted her valuable collection of jewels to a lady who must have been a close friend. After the war, this Catholic French lady contacted my father and said she had something of importance to give him, and asked him to meet her in London.

My mother related how she gave him a suede bag containing beautiful jewels with a list written by my aunt – every item on the list was there. My mother spoke of this lady as having the highest degree of honesty as no one would have known if she had not returned them. As my mother said, no amount of jewels could replace the loved ones who had been killed so cruelly, but the fact that in the midst of all that horror there was a noble soul was a comfort. My parents had no idea who this lady was, and because of the distraught state they were in, they had not kept a record of her name.

My brother and I were determined to go to La Baule after our mother died to find out who she was. Inevitably, with the passing of 68 years she would have died, so we hoped to find her descendants. We felt we would go on a sort of pilgrimage to try and find out what had happened to our family, but



mainly to find this family and honour this unknown lady.

We contacted a French newspaper in the area, who printed a full page story about our family. They also went to Linda's villa and checked with the Town Hall for any information. We had three replies in response to the article: one from the head of the Jewish community, one from an archivist studying what happened to the Jews of north-west France, and most importantly, a reply from a gentleman, Albert Gernigon, aged 81, who had been at school with our cousin Freddy.

He came to see us and told of how he remembered the Jewish children being taken out of school in February 1942, returning very embarrassed wearing the yellow star with *Juif* in the middle, which marked them out for persecution. He brought with him a list of the prizewinners of July 1942, which mentioned Freddy's name a few times, and also the name Despretz, which I had seen mentioned in my aunt's earlier letters.

That evening we visited Linda's villa and met the present residents who had no idea of the horror that had taken place there. The next morning we went to the Town Hall where they had an amazing document to show us relating to the requisition by the Germans of Linda's Villa after she had been arrested. Remarkably, this document included an eyewitness account of the arrest of Linda and the children. It read:

Madame Yvonne Despretz born 11th July 1890, living in the Villa Les Opales, Avenue Saumur tells us: 'I witnessed in the capacity of neighbour the arrest of the Besso Family 16th July 1942. The doors of the Villa Martine were locked in my presence by a German soldier. About 3 weeks ago accompanied by a German officer I entered the Villa Martine where I packed some things, sheets and clothes to send to Madame Besso to the transit camp in Angers, she having been given permission to receive some of her belongings. This done the seals were fixed on the door in my presence. The Villa Martine was in a state of inexpressible disorder when I left. Cupboards emptied, drawers opened. Since then I have seen no one enter the villa. Apart from the furniture there is nothing worth taking.'

So it appeared that the Germans had been searching for the jewellery.

We then went to a Museum, run by two French brothers, where there was no mention of what happened to the Jews during the war, followed by a visit to the Archives in nearby Nantes, where we saw the actual identity cards of our family, stamped with *Juif*.

On our return to Manchester we decided that Madame Despretz was probably the honest lady who had helped our Aunt. Her name had appeared in Linda's letters, the children were prizewinners at the school attended by my cousins, and most importantly, she had witnessed the arrest and been asked to send things to Linda in the camp. But how to find her or her family?

After searching Google and Facebook with no success, we contacted Albert Gernigon, who after eight weeks had found them. We spoke to Madame Yvonne Despretz's younger daughter, Nicole, on the phone. She remembered seeing the family arrested from their adjacent villa and certainly remembered their mother going to London with the jewels.

We arranged a reunion, or *retrouvaille* as the French call it,

with the family in November 2011 in Nantes, one hour away from La Baule. We drove down a long magnificent drive to a beautiful home in its own grounds, where 16 members of the family came to meet us. One grandson flew from Barcelona, many drove four hours from Paris and there was even one great-granddaughter of Madame Despretz. Madame Despretz had had five children, one of whom had died and one who lived in China. They were all in their 80s.

The French press were there and they watched as we played the DVD of our mother, where she spoke so movingly of their own mother, Madame Despretz.

They told how their mother saw the Gestapo coming down the road two weeks after the arrest of Linda and the children. She realised they were coming for the jewels and threw the bag containing them out of the window. She was arrested and taken to a prison for 24 hours and interrogated as to whether she was in possession of the jewels. She bravely denied it and was eventually released.

Remarkably, they had kept a small pill box labelled Madame Besso that contained trinkets and a child's pearl necklace. They had kept them safe for 68 years and returned them to us. We presented each of the children with a framed certificate of appreciation from Yad Vashem, the Memorial in Jerusalem for the 6,000,000 who perished in the Holocaust. After hearing them speak so movingly of our lost family, we retired to a beautiful restaurant where we raised our glasses to the memory of Yvonne and Linda and the children.

We felt we had honoured our parents who had been so heartbroken at this tragic loss and remembered this fine French Catholic lady who had helped and befriended our Jewish family when they must have felt so desperately afraid. She showed that amongst all that evil there was still courage and goodness. A good deed is never forgotten and lives on in the hearts of all her family and will certainly stay within our family for generations.

We could not change Linda, Jacqueline, Janine and Freddy's tragic fate of death at Auschwitz Concentration Camp, but they will never be forgotten and we must ensure that such acts of wickedness and cruelty are never to happen again.'



# A geographical journey in The Gambia

The Gambia was the destination for sixth form geographers from Cheadle Hulme School to visit the schools and women's cooperative group which CHS supports and learn something of life in a less developed country. Euan Chew-Graham describes the experience

On 14th December, 2014, 14 students and four teachers assembled at Manchester Airport to embark on our adventure to The Gambia. The journey was easy, and once we had landed in the country's capital, Banjul, we were immediately hit with a forceful wave of African heat. It was sweltering but very dry, as we queued to enter the airport terminal building – we were only permitted to enter after passing a forehead temperature scan – the first sign of the Ebola crisis plaguing West African countries.

The airport building was simple and its interior not aesthetically pleasing, but there was a sense that it wished to look grand, with smooth marble floors and tinted windows covering the entrance. Airport workers were quick to attempt to take our bags to ease our trip, which was a nice sign, but it was our first clear indication of the desperation felt by the Gambian people, and of their increasing reliance on tourist custom for their livelihood, as they were determined to earn that one extra Great British pound for their work.

The coach trip from Banjul International Airport to our hotel on the Atlantic coast was fascinating and showed the economic inequality of The Gambia and how fundamentally different it is from the country we live in. We saw how people were attempting to make money by setting up watermelon or pawpaw markets on the side of the main road, in a seemingly fruitless attempt to generate income.

We also saw many advertisement boards sporting government messages about their President of 21 years, Yahya Jammeh, but we found quickly that politics is not a topic up for discussion with the local people, learning that stability in The Gambia has yet to translate into prosperity.

Our arrival at the popular tourist destination of Kotu Beach did not go unnoticed by the locals who swarmed us and began introducing themselves, adding that “the blue shop in the square will give you the best exchange for your money”. We spent the remainder of the day getting used to the climatic and cultural differences by sunbathing and fending off over-enthusiastic ‘bumsters’.



*North face and South face.*



The following day, we visited the markets of Banjul with a group of students from the SBEC International School. The markets were for trading food for the citizens of Banjul and were far from the tourist items we had been expecting. The most potent of the foods on sale were the sun-dried fish, which were sold at every other market, causing us to consider the competition for custom.

On Tuesday, we travelled inland toward Tendaba, stopping off at Dumbotu Lower Basic School to donate equipment we had brought – generous donations of stationery from members of the Cheadle Hulme School community – that they so vitally needed. We were welcomed by the entire school and invited to join their parade from the main road to the school. Upon reaching the school, we were somewhat forcibly encouraged to partake in the dance circle with them before we toured the school and saw how inadequate it was to teach the children.

A storm in July 2014 had caused the roof to be blown away and so those classes had to be relocated to another building, resulting in each class size increasing to 80 pupils. There was an extensive ceremony where they thanked us for the gifts, grateful that they were one of the few schools to

prosper from foreign aid, and they urged us to take part in an unconventional game of school versus village football.

We stayed the night in an eco-lodge located on the river Gambia and visited Tendaba Nursery, where we delivered further supplies. The nursery had one room, and over 200 students were taught there every day, but days had to be split into morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate all the children. We spent two hours playing with them and to see the sincere joy on their faces was very moving.

Later that day, we began the journey back to our hotel, during which we drove two out of three hours on one single road, showing us how under-developed the infrastructure of the country is. We made our first stop at Badru-Deen Islamic School and at a Women's Institute, spending several hours touring both locations.

The work of the Women's Institute is especially remarkable. About 80% of the population of The Gambia is comprised of subsistence farmers and a majority of them are women, so I found giving them opportunities to learn more valued skills and basic education excellent – something that other developing countries should take note of. We spent the last

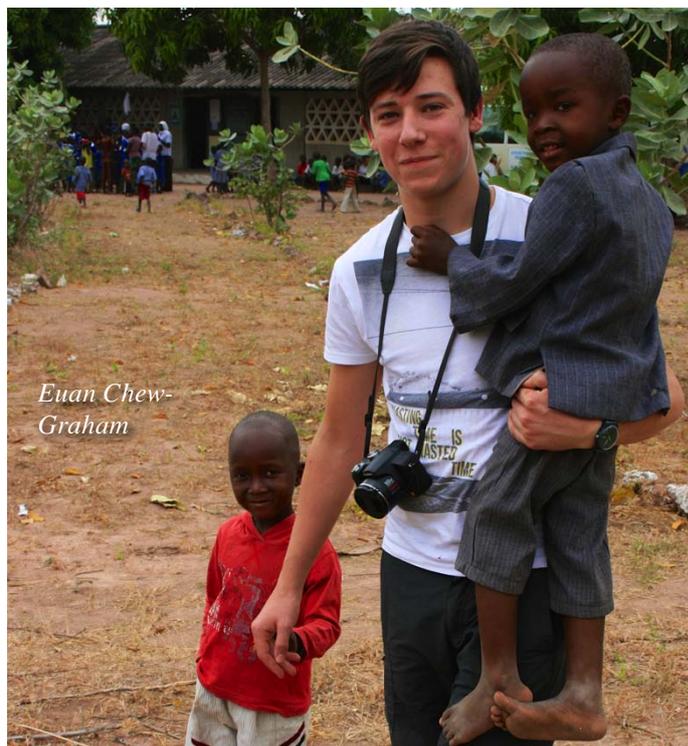
## Abroad

day investigating coastal erosion (*like all good geographers, Ed.*) and how tourism has impacted the area.

From what I saw, The Gambia is trying to change. The education system is trying to improve, but there is a lack of state funding, so they have to rely on donations to keep the schools open. The inequality is obvious; the area within a mile radius of Banjul Airport has grand mansion buildings, where the rich live; outside that radius, people live in tightly-packed, poorly built buildings. Although there are some cases of women being encouraged to learn more skills, in an attempt to give them more specialized work rather than simply having children, not enough is being done internally, which is why foreign aid is appreciated so much.

The trip was eye-opening, with all of us left feeling that our help had been appreciated, but we knew that still more is needed. The whole experience made an impression on the group and made us feel so lucky that we have the opportunity to visit these places, but it also made us feel awkward, knowing that we have so much, and they have so little.

*Euan Chew-Graham is in the lower sixth at Cheadle Hulme School and played Fagin in the school's recent production of Oliver!*



# John Greenacre

## Howard Blackett recalls a remarkable schoolmaster

After 56 years of continuous employment, John Greenacre retired from Peterhouse in December 2014. It all began with the following letter...

3 August 1957 Jesus College Cambridge  
To the Rector of Peterhouse  
Dear Mr Snell

When you were in Cambridge earlier this year I took the opportunity of asking you if you would care to have me on your staff at Peterhouse as a Mathematics Master. You asked me to write before the end of the year and let you know my Tripos result. This was not good and in fact I only obtained a... (a veil is drawn at this point!)

John Greenacre

21 August 1957 Rector's Office, Peterhouse  
Dear Greenacre

I was interested to get your letter of 3 August... I am disappointed, of course, that you did not do better in the Tripos, but would not regard that as a bar... (Still no class specified!)

Fred Snell

23 September 1957  
To Dr D R Taunt, Jesus College Cambridge  
Dear Dr Taunt

Re: John Greenacre

I write to ask if you would be so very kind as to send me a confidential note about John Greenacre. I know something

of him because I was his Headmaster in South Africa. He now writes to me to say that he would like to come and teach Mathematics in my new school here in Southern Rhodesia *etc etc*.

Fred Snell

27 September 1957 Jesus College, Cambridge  
Dear Mr Snell

Thank you for your letter about my pupil Mr J W Greenacre. He is not, of course, a high powered mathematician, but within his limits he is a sound one... His personal qualities, however, are of a high order and fit him admirably for the teaching profession. He has made a very good impression in the College by obvious sincerity and seriousness of purpose.

D R Taunt, Director of Studies in Mathematics

4 November 1957 Rector's Office  
Dear John

I have just heard from Dr Taunt and Mr Fisher and I must say they write very kindly about you and I am very glad to offer you a definite appointment to the staff here as from 1 January 1959. We are well into the third term now; in a fortnight's time we have our first Speech Day though it is somewhat in the nature of an interim occasion since the big day will come in a year's time when we shall formerly open the school and dedicate the chapel.

Fred Snell

*Continued* →

Sunday 12 October 1958 – At a café in Casablanca

Dear Mr Snell

I feel very bad about not having written to you before to confirm my arrival at Peterhouse for the first quarter, 1959. Julian Faux and I are now on our way down to Southern Africa. We catch a boat tomorrow and will then drive to Kano, Stanleyville, Nairobi, Blantyre, Salisbury and Durban.  
John Greenacre

A different world! And so it was that John arrived via a trans-African car journey at Peterhouse on Saturday, 17th January 1959, as a 23 year-old, green and eager school master; and here we are this evening – Saturday, 6th December 2014 – to celebrate the 56 years of unbroken service that he has given since then to this remarkable and unique school. Surely he must be the longest serving school master in one school of this type anywhere in the world.

In addition to teaching maths John has at various times been housemaster of Paget (1966 to December 1977), housemaster of Grinham (1990 to 1994), senior master (1977 to 2002) and acting Rector during Lent 1994. He has coached tennis, squash and cricket; he ran both the bridge and chess clubs for nearly 40 years (1962 to the early 2000s); he participated in numerous Kalahari expeditions and trips to the Chimanimani; he has run the pupils' bank since 1979 and in semi-retirement he has looked after our Archives and has been Petrean Secretary.

The stats are mind-boggling. John has served under all six Rectors, has completed 168 terms, must have taught something like 50,000 lessons and spent the equivalent of a whole year in the chapel, but surely the record that gives him most satisfaction is the time it took him to travel from the Peterhouse pyramids to Coronation Park, Harare, way back in the early 1960s – 25 minutes in an E Type Jag!

John's motoring methods were the stuff of legends:

He owned two cars, a white Jaguar E-type, which we all lusted after, and a Land Rover estate. The story goes that



*Peterhouse Boys (founded 1955).*

he was returning from Harare with the entire tennis team in his Land Rover, when they ran into a heavy downpour and the windscreen wipers failed. Undaunted, John selected the smallest member of the team and told him to sit in the spare tyre on the bonnet and wipe the windscreen with his tennis shirt, while he drove slowly back.

Giles Talbot (P 1960-64)

He was also not a man to take defeat lying down:

In 1967, on the occasion of the Annual Parents' Open Day, Johnny G, as we affectionately knew him, had set up a very basic computer (a binary machine) as part of the maths exhibit, for parents and boys to interact with. My father played Matchsticks with it and went on to beat the machine. Johnny G was a little chastened and asked for another chance to impress by inviting me to write down any question to test the machine's 'knowledge'.

My father suggested I write down, 'Where is my father?' This I duly did and after Johnny G had typed in the question, the reply came: 'Your father is playing golf on the 17th hole at the Royal Salisbury Golf Course' Whereupon I crowed, "No he's not! He is standing right behind me!"

Unfazed Johnny G said he would check why the wrong answer had been given – by this time a small group of interested on-lookers had gathered round. More typing and then the amended reply, 'The man married to your mother is standing behind you; your father is playing golf on the 17th hole at the Royal Salisbury Golf Course!' Much mirth and honours even!

Pip Masterton (M 1963-67)

*Howard Blackett is Rector of the Peterhouse Group of Boarding Schools, Marondera, Zimbabwe.*

*John Greenacre with colleagues.*

**ALCOHOL AWARENESS**

(What can be known should be known)

**AFTER 'THE GOWNS OF RADLEY'**

(From syringes, cardboard and courts to Government Advisor)

**ILLEGAL OR LEGAL – KNOW THE RISKS**

(Drugs Education for all age groups)

**FROM EVERYTHING TO NOTHING**

(Rebuilding my life after Drug Addiction)

**BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DRINK**

(How it was... What happened... How it is now)

**SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT DRUGS?**

(Myths exploded and the facts laid bare)

**SMOKING - IT'S YOUR CHOICE**

(To start or to stop - you decide)

**SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS**

(Let's talk)

**POSITIVE VOICE**

(HIV/AIDS – knowledge saves lives)

**LOVE THE SKIN YOU'RE IN**

(Body Image, Self Esteem, Body Confidence)

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**FOOD FOR LIFE**

(How a small change in diet can affect every aspect of your life)

**SHORT SLEEVES, HAPPY MINDS**

(Helping to understand Self Harm among young people)

**GRIEF ENCOUNTER**

(Talking to Teens about Bereavement)

**R.T.A. – NOT JUST ANOTHER STATISTIC**

(Change the way you think about Driving)

**HARD TIME**

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

**BANGED UP ABROAD**

(Teacher, drug smuggler, convict, graduate)

**INSIDE OUT**

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

**A NEW LIFE WITH DISABILITIES**

(Helicopter down cuts short military career)

**PICTURING WAR**

(Conflict Photography from the Front Line)

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(Using Life Lessons Learned through Sport to Survive)

**BULLYING**

(Fists and words leave bruises)

**ON THE TURN OF A CARD**

(Compulsive gambling costs you more than just money)

**LIFE LESSONS**

(A self-help talk like no other)

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

(Nobody plans to fail – they just fail to plan)

**PREPARING FOR INDEPENDENCE**

(Life skills for leaving home)

**THE SECOND WORLD WAR: THE OTHER SIDE**

(Seen through the eyes of an ordinary German family)

**PARENTS – PARENTING FOR PREVENTION**

(Life skills for leaving home)

ANTHONY McLELLAN

CHIP SOMERS

BOB TAIT and BARRY EVANS

OLI HENDERSON

JIM SMITH

MANDY SALIGARI

ROGER HARDING

ROZ BICEN

EMMA COLE

NATASHA DEVON

CONSTANCE BARTER

TINA LOND-CAULK

NATASHA DEVON

ROZ BICEN

JOHN ALLEN

SHAUN ATTWOOD

SANDRA GREGORY

ANGELA FINDLAY

STEVE PENDLETON

RICK FINDLER

JOHN HOSKISON

ROBERT HIGGS

STEVE ANDREWS

SHAUN ATTWOOD

ROGER HARDING

ROGER HARDING

ANGELA FINDLAY

MANDY SALIGARI

# Taking the British Independent School brand abroad

Our schools now have a more extensive view, as Johnson said, ‘from China to Peru’!



*Cricket at Marlborough College Malaysia.*

The overseas market is increasingly enticing UK independent schools that see the international successes of British brands such as Harrow, Repton, Sherborne, Marlborough and Dulwich. Twenty UK schools came together in March to learn more about the opportunities for expansion within the international schools market today, and to hear first-hand advice from the leaders of two established international schools, Michael Weston of Sherborne School Qatar and Bob Pick of Marlborough College Malaysia.

## Taking Sherborne to Qatar

Michael Weston is the Senior Headmaster of Sherborne Qatar. The school was established in 2009 at the invitation of Qatar’s Supreme Education Council (SEC) as part of its Outstanding Schools Initiative. Michael was involved from the outset.

“It all happened amazingly quickly,” he says. “The first meeting was in May 2008. Due diligence was completed, a business model produced, partners at Ernst and Young who were based in Doha and were familiar with the lie of the land did much of the necessary behind-the-scenes work, and SEC provided a school in which we could operate.

“Sherborne sent a team of two to Doha to handle the setting up and opening. They kitted out the school, employing the support staff and Arabic teachers locally. Meanwhile, back in Dorset, we set about employing other teachers internationally, largely from British prep schools; appointed a British prep school Headmaster; and everyone flew out to open the school

in September 2009. Everything happened very quickly – there are lessons to be learned from that,” he says.

Six years on, Sherborne Qatar has over 1,000 pupils: 600 in pre-school, pre-prep and prep, and 400 in senior school. The school will complete its age-range expansion in September 2015 when it opens its upper sixth. Located in a region where international schooling, particularly English-medium British education, is prized, demand for places at Sherborne Qatar outstrips supply.

“We set out to be a serious contender as one of the best British curriculum schools in Doha, working in cooperation rather than competition with other such schools here,” says Michael. “With the exception of our Arabic staff, all of our teachers must have a Department of Education (DfE) recognised teaching qualification, and we still recruit almost entirely face-to-face in London every year and exclusively from the UK. Our curriculum is English National Curriculum with enhancements and we offer GCSE, IGCSE and A levels.”

Sherborne Qatar is a joint venture between the Supreme Education Council and Sherborne UK. Although the SEC is the regulator, sets the fee level, monitors the admissions process and the delivery of Arabic, Islamic studies and Qatari history, Sherborne UK monitors the educational standards of the school.

“We have an annual review process and four governors from Sherborne UK come out three or four times a year to check that we have the resources and facilities we need,” explains Michael. “We also have inspections from British Schools of the



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*Marlborough College  
Malaysia – the  
boarding house.*

Middle East (BSME), Council of British International Schools (COBIS) and British Schools Overseas (BSO). The reputation of Sherborne UK counts for a lot, but I think we have also proved ourselves to be a proper school in our own right.”

Michael offers advice to UK independent schools considering international opportunities. “Give sufficient time to the planning and development stage. Have a very clear understanding between the mother ship and your overseas developer about how it’s all going to work. In-country expertise is crucial for giving you independent advice. Grow your school one year at a time, planning on a slow build-up as opposed to opening a huge school that needs filling quickly. Proceed with caution and be prepared for anything to happen.”

### **Establishing Marlborough in South East Asia**

Bob Pick, founding Master of Marlborough College Malaysia, agrees with Michael’s advice. He says the experience of establishing and opening the school ultimately had great rewards but was a huge challenge.

“Anyone thinking of starting a school internationally has got to recognise that by day one, when the pupils walk through the door with their parents for the first time, you have to have absolutely everything in place that has taken you possibly 100 years to establish in your current school.”

Local conditions bring new demands, explains Bob. “Architects, consultants and contractors operate in different ways. The fit-out is often not easy because of limited local accessibility and the inevitable problems with customs and transportation. Obtaining permits, permissions and licensing, and creating contracts for such services as catering and facilities management, can all be quite challenging,” he says.

“Don’t believe people when they say it can be done within two years. It’s phenomenally hard work and very time consuming. Give yourself longer rather than shorter to get to the end point.”

Marlborough College Malaysia opened in 2012 with 350 pupils and today has 740 students, some of whom are the school’s first pioneers of the IB Diploma Programme. “Next year we will take them through to the upper sixth, the school will expand to 800 and then we will have to move to phase two of the development, because we’re close to capacity within the current buildings,” says Bob.

Like Sherborne Qatar, Marlborough emphasises its British

roots. One of the reasons Malaysia was selected as a location was because, as a region, it understands and values British education. The school attracts students from such countries as Singapore and Japan whose families like the idea of their children attending a typically British school. And its common room comprises teachers mostly from the UK, 20% of whom have some association with Marlborough in Wiltshire.

“They are the reason we’re able to inculcate the ethos, the culture and the style of Marlborough UK,” explains Bob. “We’ve also got old Marlburian gap and post graduate students who spend part or all of the academic year with us, which is a lovely way to bring the Marlborough message to Malaysia.”

Nevertheless, the faculty includes skilled teachers from other countries, including New Zealand, South Africa, China, Singapore and Malaysia. “With a pupil body of 36 nationalities, it’s good to have a mix of teachers too, so that the school has an international flavour in all constituencies,” adds Bob.

Sharing advice, he says: “Find the right partner. International schooling can be an education but there are people out there who will make the money for themselves and leave you in a pretty poor position. With that in mind, decide early on what you want your school to be. Are you going to be a school which reflects and is an expansion of your school in England, or are you going to enter the franchise model and just take a cut of the surplus?”

“Make sure you are absolutely clear with the government (not your partner) what the rules and regulations are for the country that you are going to. And even when you have signed your memorandum of understanding, make sure that you do further due diligence, commission a market feasibility study, and you get your legals correct; all essential for your long-term success.”

The seminar for UK independent schools was hosted by the International School Consultancy (ISC), the leading provider of data and market intelligence on the world’s international school market. Market intelligence reports from ISC inform the decisions for many UK independent schools considering and progressing with overseas expansion. More details about these reports, including the ISC Global Market Intelligence Report and key country reports (including reports for Malaysia and Qatar) are available from [www.iscresearch.com](http://www.iscresearch.com) or call 01367 246009

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# Never Alone



*Der Mittag* – Caspar David Friedrich

A poem by Oundle School pupil Alanna Gilmartin (15) has won first prize in the English Secondary School section of a poetry competition run by The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to coincide with an exhibition at The British Museum, ‘Germany – Memories of a Nation’.

The exhibition focuses on iconic objects reflecting German history. Each of these tells a story and pupils were asked to bring the story of the object to life in a poetic form known as *Dinggedicht*, a ‘thing poem’ – a poem based on an object. The exhibition was relatively small, but each object or ‘thing’ had been chosen with great care and spoke eloquently of a particular feature of German history.

From the Renaissance to Reunification and beyond, the show uses objects to investigate the complexities of addressing German history, navigating Germany’s many political changes from the Holy Roman Empire to the 20th

century. *Dinggedichte* complemented these works of art by being works of art in their own right.

The competitors could approach the task from any angle and Alanna’s poem, entitled *Never Alone*, was based on Caspar David Friedrich’s painting, *Der Mittag* (1821-22). Far from Friedrich’s well-known winter and mountain scenes, this shows a quite different side of the artist as he compares the times of day on a calm German heath, an aspect of his increasing interest in maturity and decline.

In December, Alanna was invited to read her poem at the prize-giving ceremony at The British Museum, followed by talks by Emeritus Professor Martin Swales (University College London) and Berlin novelist Annett Gröschner.

Emily Wagstaffe, head of German at Oundle School, added, “Having learnt about the competition at the launch of the Cambridge German Network, I was keen to encourage all



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### *Never Alone* by Alanna Gilmartin

As the mist fell over the hills,  
Spooking the rabbits,  
They stood tall,  
Watching over the fields.

When you listen hard you can hear,  
Hear their whistle,  
Hear their beautiful song,  
Hear their hearts thump.

Warmed by their breath,  
Filling your lungs,  
Opening your eyes,  
Lifting your heart up to the clouds.

Listen closely and you will know,  
They watch over your crop,  
They hear your cries,  
They clear your heavy soul.

pupils studying German here at Oundle to participate. I was overwhelmed with the enthusiasm our pupils showed. They all set about writing their poems in various ways, in German and in English, and were inspired by lots of different items from the exhibition.

“Alanna clearly spent time researching Friedrich’s painting and produced a wonderful reflection of his work in her *Dinggedicht*. As head of German, I am thrilled with her success and congratulate her and all the entrants for their hard work and efforts, with particular thanks to the DAAD for creating the competition, and the British Museum for their wonderful exhibition.”

*Alanna Gilmartin*

Take a walk outside,  
Tread over the stones,  
Stay awake long enough to see,  
They are there, watching you.

Your life may be sad,  
Your life may cause tears,  
Walk outside,  
They help.

You’re not alone in this world,  
You are loved,  
You are important  
To them.

Don’t give up,  
Take a walk,  
Let the trees  
Show the way.

## Quick Wit

[Christopher Martin ponders July: conclusion or commencement?](#)

The Americans call the end of their academic year Commencement. Possibly this is because they start their summer holidays early in June, and thus are still able to stress the positive when waving goodbye to the cohort of their senior year. In the UK, we are more jaded by mid to late July and therefore tend to see the end of the academic year more in terms of finality.

The need for teachers to buckle down and write umpteen reports in the last couple of weeks only seems to emphasise the fact that the end is nigh. Over the years the writing of reports has developed into a literary genre all of its own. Idiosyncrasy mixed with black humour used to characterise whole swathes of report writing before the arrival of the Report Writers’ Data Base. Nowadays, sentences can be plucked ready made

from this resource, covering everything from attendance and punctuality to the ability to concentrate for anything up to five minutes. Banality and a reluctance to pass any meaningful, let alone personal judgement, rule.

Reading this sort of stuff makes one long for the good old days when teachers told it like it is. ‘Tom has taken all term to produce a good stool’, or ‘He has not done as well as I expected. I didn’t think he would’, are evidence of the degree of exhaustion experienced in July by the authors. ‘He is bottom. He is quite the worst bottom I have ever seen’, would today land the author in court, as would ‘Her achievements this term do not even feature on her Richter scale of failure with which I have become so depressingly familiar in the past.’

On the other hand, ‘I am Sisyphus and Amanda is my rock,’

## Endpiece

has a creative touch and conveys at least a hint of the devotion with which the teacher is determined to make something happen for Amanda, despite Amanda's apparent reluctance to get involved in the enterprise. The idiosyncratic Nobel Prize for report writing, however, goes to an Eton beak who wrote on a leaver's UCAS form, 'You know, he's quite a nice old thing really.' Apparently it worked.

The art of mixing encouragement with brutal truth is a special gift, exemplified perhaps by one teacher who, reprimanded by her Head for giving minus marks to pupils, handed back the next homework to one of her girls with the comment, 'Nought out of ten. A tremendous improvement.'

There are legions of examples of quotable report writing, of course, and not all occur in schools. A military officer once wrote on a subaltern's file, 'I would not breed from this officer.' And a college chaplain, asked for a reference for a former student applying for the ministry, certainly did not mince his words: 'He has made no contribution, done no work and made no friends but if you were to recommend him as priest in charge of a crematorium, I suppose I would not raise any serious objection.'

The end of year is also characterised by prizegiving. Reports are written, the holidays beckon and all is well with the world, to such an extent that teachers often forgive their charges their various sins of omission and commission and prepare to applaud their successes instead. Prizegiving is a popular pastime among educationists, and not merely because it invariably marks the conclusion of yet another hard fought year against the forces of philistinism. The bright, the clever, the sporty and those who try hard are rewarded for their skills and efforts in public and there is much satisfaction enjoyed by parents, teachers and even pupils for their many achievements.

Mutual congratulation is indulged, for we are all tempted to think we have played our part in the various triumphs involved. Cups and certificates are handed out in profusion by the great and the good, hands are shaken, photographs taken. Capacious, improving and high-sounding words are uttered and dutifully applauded.

But what of those whose hands are not shaken, whose parents eschew photo opportunities, those of whom no panegyrics are sung? In Queen's famous number *We are the Champions*, there is the disconcerting line 'No time for losers'.

Does prize winning status for some confirm loser status on the rest? Or do the rest take it all in their stride, assuming – based on their experience thus far – that prizes are never going to come their way? These pupils learn yet another of life's tough lessons, namely that the world is not always full of winners. They are temporarily forsaken. The Alfred Dutton Primary School spelt this out clearly in one of its publications: 'Do your best and rejoice with those who do better.'

Ogden Nash is philosophical on the issue. 'The race is not always to the fast, nor victory to the strong – but that's the way to bet.' But the injustice that is intrinsic to prizegiving is not only inescapable; it's also culpable. Think of the innumerable pupils we have all known who have done their sterling best, bitten their fingernails to the quick, shed salt tears of frustration over the problems that defeat them, but for whom no prize seems to beckon.

The gifted person who waltzes through school with top grades has his own rewards aplenty, needing no further encouragement than the pleasure of doing things well, while



the also ran who strained every nerve and sinew for his grade D deserves a genuine accolade – but seldom gets it. All too often our system lets these people down.

And it gets worse. Currently we are being urged to persuade the young of the virtue of studying 'difficult' subjects post GCSE, while those who express interest in 'easier' subjects are greeted with furrowed brows and sucked teeth by everyone from the Secretary of State for Education downwards.

Of course the exigencies of the looming job market cannot be ignored, but we have to find better ways of harnessing *all* young people's prospective contributions, and this will not happen until *all* pupils are enthusiastically encouraged throughout their school career. You cannot praise the young too often. Only when all its pupils are convinced they can do something – anything – really well, can a school truly claim to be successful. Those who leave our schools confident that they at least know how to learn are well equipped for the next stages of their life. If this criterion were accepted, the whole prizegiving syndrome could be stood on its head.

As it is, those invited to hand out the prizes normally do so willingly, for what's not to like about being at the heart of institutional thanksgiving? The unwary can, however, be taken by surprise by the young whom they encounter on such occasions, whose priorities do not always chime with those of the older visitor.

One such young person was encountered by Sir Kenneth Dover at a well-known independent school. While shaking the hand of a manifestly confident leaver, he asked her politely, "And what will you be doing next?" The reply was as unexpected as it was flattering. "Well, I was planning to go home with my parents, but what do you have in mind?"

And then suddenly it's all over. The term has run its course and so in most cases have the teachers. The pupils have left rejoicing and a pall of eerie silence falls on the campus. At Gordonstoun it was said that within a couple of hours of the last pupil leaving for their holiday, the deer emerged from the forest and started to graze the rugby pitches. Nature reasserts itself when education has shot its bolt – a salutary lesson for us all.

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



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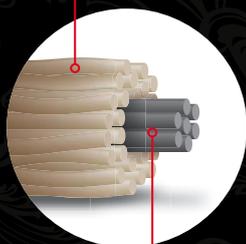


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