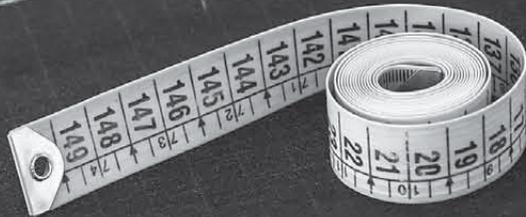


Volume 52 Number 3 Autumn 2015

# Conference & common room

The magazine for leading  
independent schools





## OUR SERVICE IS AS BESPOKE AS OUR UNIFORMS

Uniform is an integral part of your school's brand identity, so you need a partner who is expert in creating distinctive designs and sourcing high quality fabrics which make an impact. We also tailor our wide range of support services to make buying easy all year round. With 90 years' experience, maybe it's time you tried us for size.



retail shops



school shops



popup shops



online



phone



**Stevensons**  
www.stevensons.co.uk

t: 01727 815715

e: info@stevensons.co.uk

## Contents

Editorial	5
<b>World class</b>	
Adding a global perspective to a foundation for life, <i>John Attwater</i>	7
Nurturing international relations, <i>Roger Peel</i>	10
Passport to success, <i>Toby Belfield</i>	13
<b>From the Common Room</b>	
The parents' forum, <i>O R Houseman</i>	16
Dumbo's feather and other elephant jokes, <i>Kris Spencer</i>	18
Teachers – society's corset, <i>Christopher Martin</i>	21
Emotional solvency is more important than money in the bank, <i>Tracy Shand</i>	24
<b>Learning and languages</b>	
Into the emailstrom, <i>John Weiner</i>	26
Communication and culture, <i>Geran Jones</i>	27
Play up! Play up! And play the game, <i>Cat Scutt</i>	29
Shall and will, <i>C J Driver</i>	31
'He is an Englishman!'	32
<b>Schools</b>	
Nottingham Girls' HS: working with and for the community	34
Adversity proved the mother of progress, <i>Sue Grief</i>	36
'Comparison is the thief of joy', <i>Helen Jeys</i>	38
Street food and international cuisine, <i>Ronan Harte</i>	40
<b>Teamwork</b>	
When teamwork becomes partnership, <i>Malcolm Tozer</i>	42
Vision and partnership transform Yarm School	46
The King Alfred School Village Project, <i>Stephen De Brett</i>	48
<b>Book reviews</b>	
It's the adolescent, stupid, <i>Kevin Stannard</i>	51
A mathematical tour-de-force, <i>Francis Chalmers</i>	55
Oxford movement – from New Inn Hall Street to Summertown, <i>David Gibbs</i>	57



On target at Tonbridge.  
See page 42.

# SIMS INDEPENDENT



## The insight every independent school needs to deliver a world-class education

Featuring award-winning technology to give a clear picture of school performance, SIMS is designed to meet the unique needs of your independent school. Here's why:

- Supports you in delivering a well-rounded education
- Provides a fully integrated academic and financial solution
- Helps you to build strong links with parents
- SIMS is the leading management information system (MIS) in the independent school sector.

Over  
670 independent  
schools worldwide  
trust the **innovation,**  
**breadth** and  
**capability** of SIMS

Find out more:

Tel: +44 (0) 1285 647459 • [www.capita-independent.co.uk](http://www.capita-independent.co.uk)

**tes** independent  
school awards

In association with

SIMS INDEPENDENT



**Editor**

Tom Wheare

**Managing Editor**

Derek Bingham

**Production Editor**

Scott James

**Advertising Manager**

Madeleine Anderson

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

ISSN 0265 4458

## Subscriptions:

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

Advertising and Subscription enquiries to the publishers:

John Catt Educational Ltd,  
12 Deben Mill Business Centre,  
Old Maltings Approach,  
Melton, Woodbridge,  
Suffolk IP12 1BL.

Tel: (01394) 389850.

Fax: (01394) 386893.

Email: enquiries@johncatt.com

**Managing Director**

Alex Sharratt

**Publishing Director**

Derek Bingham

ISSN 0265 4458

## Editorial address:

Tom Wheare,  
63 Chapel Lane, Zeals,  
Warminster,  
Wilts BA12 6NP  
Email: tom@dunbry.plus.com

Opinions expressed in *Conference & Common Room* are not necessarily those of the publishers; likewise advertisements and editorial are printed in good faith, and their inclusion does not imply endorsement by the publishers.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Editor and/or the publishers.

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

 John Catt Educational Ltd  
is a member of the  
Independent Publishers' Guild.

Chris Woodhead, who died in June this year, was an educational kaleidoscope. His career covered a unique breadth of experience, from 'progressive' teacher in the 1960s to proponent of 'traditional' methods as head of Ofsted in the 1990s. Once the most senior executive in the system of education maintained and provided by the state, he became founding Chairman of Cognita, a private company owning and operating independent schools, and a visiting professor at the University of Buckingham, the only independent university in the UK.

He attracted widespread attention, much of it hostile, and he stimulated educational debate like few others. This was partly because he specialised in provoking disagreement to make sure that issues were properly argued through. As Simon Jenkins wrote in *The Guardian*, 'He climbed an argument as he climbed a mountain, because it was there'. His restless energy, high intelligence and willingness to speak his mind made him the most significant, as well as the most polarising, figure in education in this country, a prominence that was recognised with a knighthood in 2011. He made people think.

Chris Woodhead and Anthony O'Hear were, in effect, the founding fathers of the Department of Education at the University of Buckingham. This is now closely associated with independent schools in providing teacher training, as described by the departmental Dean, Geraint Jones, in the May 2015 issue of *Conference & Common Room*. Anthony Seldon's appointment as the university's Vice-Chancellor from September this year may well strengthen these links and will certainly create a stimulating atmosphere on the banks of the Great Ouse.

Sir Anthony's transition from Wellington coincides with a milestone of great significance to the College, the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. The Allied army that defeated Napoleon was the crowning achievement of Britain's prolonged financial and military intervention in Europe. As soon as the Congress of Vienna had redrafted the map of Europe, this country resumed its traditional isolation, later exemplified in the newspaper hoarding, 'FOG IN CHANNEL – CONTINENT CUT OFF'.

During the Second World War, the United States funded the alliance to resist European tyranny. The abrupt cessation of aid for the UK and the presentation of a gigantic bill was a major factor in the rapid and final decline of the British Empire. The United States disapproved of imperialism, or maybe, as subsequent developments might suggest, of any version of imperialism but their own.

In the post-war years, many of the European homelands from which Americans had migrated over the previous century were sustained by transatlantic generosity. Even the cash-strapped British government played a significant role in the rebuilding of western Germany after the war by implementing there the educational reforms that never quite took off at home. Robert Birley, the principal author of the Fleming Report on Education, was asked to give up his post as Headmaster of Charterhouse and become the educational advisor to the British zone in Germany, which he did with transformative effect.

In his book *Red Robert*, Arthur Hearnden describes how the future Headmaster of Eton acquired this inaccurate *soubriquet*. When Birley's appointment was announced, it was reported in well-connected circles that he had a picture of Karl Marx in his office in Berlin. As it happened, the occupant of the next-door room, a man called Armitage, was responsible for travel arrangements and he inevitably received a steady stream of visitors, many of them heading home, eager to share their experiences and impressions. The shocking portrait belonged to Armitage not Birley and depicted Brahms not Marx.

The Establishment had, of course, been thoroughly infiltrated by left-wingers as a result of the 1945 General Election, which took so many by surprise, including

## Editorial

the new Prime Minister and the King. In fact the infant opinion polls had done a much better job than their sophisticated successors did earlier this year. The Gallup poll, which first started analysing opinions in this country in 1937, had shown a Labour lead for over two years.

Such sampling of public opinion had been stopped in February 1940 with Chamberlain on 51% approval and the opposition parties on 27%. When polling resumed in June 1943, Labour had 38% of the vote to the Conservatives' 31%. In the summer of 1945, on the eve of the election, the now defunct *News Chronicle* (creator of the marvellous I-Spy books) predicted the results with extraordinary accuracy and absolutely no recognition.

One reason why so few had seen this coming was the popularity of Churchill, which the Conservatives felt would carry them through. The cult of personality started by Mussolini, followed by Hitler and Stalin and earnestly desired by De Gaulle, was a dominant journalistic trope in the pre-war years of crisis and in the war itself. Churchill became emblematic, although public opinion was not always uncritical, as can be seen in the fascinating extracts from Mass Observation diaries now available in print. His famous speeches and his orotund literary style are fine examples of the heights the English language can reach, but 'presidentialism' can cut both ways, as the media can blight a party's chances by attacking their leader, as they did with Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock and Ed Milliband. Reducing a political party or a government, let alone a whole country, to a single individual is both absurd and dangerous, and is a syndrome that can also affect Headteachers.

Introducing children to the mysteries of teamwork is one of the most important features of school. Malcolm Tozer and Stephen De Brett write about two ways of doing this, whilst the developments at Yarm School illustrate the extraordinary things that are possible if a school can establish an imaginative and reliable partnership with a financial institution. Our schools are increasingly multi-cultural, which gives free rein to

the creativity of their catering departments, as Ronan Harte explains. Geran Jones makes a powerful case for rescuing our children from Plato's cave and ensuring, by travel and linguistic fluency, that they are familiar with the continent of which they are a part.

Most school leavers, however, do not have the luxury of contemplating a gap year, and those who do usually work for part of the time to raise money to fund their plans. There are few more steep or rewarding learning curves than paid work. The change from school is startling and the ability to get on with all sorts of people, including customers, who are, by the rules of the game, always right, is a vital skill to acquire. Leavers from our schools will also find that the richness and variety of our culture is not confined to what they may have been handed on a plate.

Another significant landmark in 2015 is the 800th anniversary of the signing of *Magna Carta*. Regardless of what was actually in the small script, *Magna Carta* is a symbol of individual liberty and treasured as such in many parts of the world. These two words are a symbolic justification for resistance to overweening central power. It is an irony that the Greeks, who produced political thought far more advanced than anything in the minds of those gathered on Runnymede, should now find themselves the victims of powers beyond their control, with whom they are unable to negotiate their own protective charter. Global capitalism is not necessarily concerned with the rights of the individual or the nation state. Thomas Jefferson's lapidary definition of basic human rights as 'Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' is an even better watchword against tyranny than *Magna Carta*, and it has the bonus of being in English.

However much this country has declined from its imperial zenith, the English language is spoken all over the world; and beyond the UK, over 4 million children study in English-medium schools, established by such educational providers as Anthony Seldon's Wellington College and Chris Woodhead's Cognita.

---

*'However much this country has declined from its imperial zenith, the English language is spoken all over the world; and beyond the UK, over 4 million children study in English-medium schools...'*

---

# Adding a global perspective to a foundation for life

John Attwater celebrates the international dimension in UK independent schools

The Tudors were surely the most intellectual dynasty to occupy the English throne. The fountainhead was Lady Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII's mother, who founded two colleges at Cambridge and a school in Wimborne, Dorset. Her son not only implemented his mother's intentions in Cambridge, but also funded the continued building of his Lancastrian uncle's chapel in King's College. His son and his grandchildren all founded schools and took a keen interest in the two universities.

Henry VIII was a genuine polymath and both he and his three children spoke Latin, French and Spanish fluently. Henry, like his great-nephew King James, was profoundly interested in theology, delighting in the cut and thrust of argument. His son Edward was as much a convinced Protestant as his half-sister Mary was a Roman Catholic and they were both anxious to see their religious views adopted and maintained in their kingdom.

Prompted by Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, Edward urged the Lord Mayor of London to provide for poor children, backing this up with grants of land, buildings and money. Christ's Hospital was established as a school at Newgate and the Bridewell Hospital became a refuge for homeless children. Both schools eventually moved out of London, the Bridewell in 1867 and Christ's Hospital in 1897, but both have retained strong links with the City. The relocated school in the Surrey village of Witley brought with it the name of its royal founder, which it had taken on in 1860.

The original Bridewell Hospital was the setting for Holbein's magnificent painting, *The Ambassadors*. The international dimension so vital in the City of London, then and now, is also a vital element in King Edward's School, as the present Headmaster, John Attwater, explains.

Much has been made recently by Ofsted and the government of the requirement for all schools, state maintained and independent, to promote fundamental British values, capturing that elusive sense of what it is to be British while including the diversity of cultures and faiths that make up Britain today, and the global perspective to recognise our nation's place in the world community.

If you believe some sections of the media, the 'ivory towers'

of the English public school might be the last place to look for a wide, let alone global, perspective. But nothing could be further from the truth, and in fact it is something which UK independent schools, especially boarding schools, have developed uniquely well.

As an embodiment of the British traditions of pursuing excellence, holistic education of mind and body and preparation for adult life in leading professions, we know that UK





university of  
 groningen



The Netherlands

- > 25 English-taught Bachelor Degrees
- > 110 English-taught Master Degrees



/universityofgroningen



/universityofgroningen

Visit us at  
The Student  
World Fairs in  
London  
October 3,  
2015



Top 100 University

[www.rug.nl/education](http://www.rug.nl/education)

*King  
Edwards'  
pupils.*

*John Attwater*



independent education is in huge demand around the world. It should come as no surprise that something we do supremely well (UK independent schools top the PISA rankings among other measures) is in such demand by international students in search of the best education and preparation for life they can find.

Once again, though, if you believe the media, the presence of such students from overseas is something we should be wary of because it somehow spoils what we want for our children. Far from it. The presence of overseas students is something we should capitalise on, not resent, as a brilliant opportunity to prepare all our children for their future as leaders in the modern world.

At King Edward's Witley our community is a cosmopolitan one where around a third of the student body come from some 43 different countries. It works really well for these students: the diversity of nationalities ensures English is the *lingua franca* and an environment rooted in the Surrey countryside, where their day pupil friends (another third of the school community) live and grow up, gives them a fully British experience and a real sense of place.

For the British majority at King Edward's, the benefits are immeasurable. In the first place, growing up alongside people from different parts of the world encourages global-mindedness in an otherwise potentially insular part of the world, and from first-hand experience rather than through media or other preconceptions. To have their eyes opened to the possibility of study abroad (which is their friends' experience already, of course) brings universities in Europe, the USA or further afield onto the horizon as real and exciting possibilities.

Many of our students will end up in multinational companies with careers taking them throughout the world and, even if they are based in London, where a third of people were born outside the UK, the imperative to be able to understand and work alongside people from very different backgrounds and cultures will be crucial to get ahead. And lastly, as I always say to parents, they will never need to stay in a hotel again: with friends all over the world, that GAP year is sorted!

Most importantly, and at the risk of sounding pious, creating a diverse community, but one based and steeped in a single nation's tradition, gives our pupils a sense of what is really important about one another and an understanding which we can only hope will help their generation to experience a more peaceful world. The perspective on real world situations to be gained from those who live with them day by day is a salutary lesson against superficial judgements or 'nimbyism' as well as a wonderful opportunity for cultural, intellectual and moral enrichment.

In one of the most remarkable chapel services I can remember at King Edward's, during the 2014 demonstrations in Kiev, a Ukrainian student stood up and spoke of his half term week spent delivering medical supplies to injured protesters in Independence Square. That was eye-opening enough, but then his best friend, a Russian from St Petersburg, came forward to talk about the fierce argument they had had over Ukrainian independence but how, in the end, they couldn't bring themselves to fight because their friendship transcended the politics foisted on them by their nationality. Nobody left chapel that day without a new understanding of the reality of war but, even more so, of the possibilities for peace where leaders of and within nations can have been school friends together.

Of course there is a balance to be struck. As I have hinted, maintaining a spread of representation and a distinctive British tradition is crucial for UK and overseas pupils alike. But where it works, as at King Edward's, it creates the most exciting, vibrant and forward-thinking of educational environments imaginable, and one which should be aspired to by British families as it already is by their overseas counterparts. What better British value could there be?

*John Attwater taught at Wells Cathedral School and Sevenoaks School before becoming Headmaster of King Edward's Witley in 2010.*



# Nurturing international relations

Roger Peel is inspired by a British school in Athens

He writes about a British school that started in the grounds of the British Embassy in Athens in 1956, under the aegis of the Ambassador and his wife, Sir Charles and Lady Peake. Their son John became a transformative Headmaster of The Diocesan College, Capetown, and St Catherine's has gone from strength to strength, maintaining significant links with its diplomatic origins, but now teaching children of over 50 nationalities.

In 2001, I received a call from Peter Armstrong, former head of Worth School, whom I had got to know well during my time as membership secretary at HMC. Peter had by then moved on to become head of St Catherine's British School in Athens and was keen to know whether I knew any recently retired HMC heads who might be interested in joining the board of governors. We discussed one or two possible names and at the end of the conversation he dropped in the comment "I suppose we couldn't interest you in it?"

At that time I was already a governor at three UK based

independent schools but the thought of governing in an international environment did have its attractions. Indicating to Peter that I might be interested led to a call from the British Ambassador in Greece and before long I found myself travelling to Athens each term to attend meetings. It has been a fascinating experience!

In my early days as a Head, if a member of staff had asked my opinion about whether teaching abroad was a sensible move, I would probably have been cautious about the impact it might have on a career path at home, especially if that person was ambitious for promotion in the UK independent sector. My experience of St Catherine's has completely changed my thinking and my eyes have been opened to some excellent career opportunities in the international arena.

I am confident that we shall see far more interchange between staff from UK schools and those in British schools abroad, and that it will be seen increasingly as an acceptable part of a career pathway leading to promotion. Whatever stage you might be in your career, have an open mind, expand your

horizons and consider the many opportunities provided in these excellent British international schools.

St Catherine's is in many senses as British as it gets. Staffed in the main by teachers from the UK, it delivers an education that includes all the Key Stages found in schools in England, leading on to IGCSE in Year 11, with IB delivered in the sixth form. Most leavers are looking at Russell Group universities in the UK or Ivy League in the US.

The Head is a member of HMC and COBIS, the school belongs to AGBIS and ISBA and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission in England, which is required to approve any changes to the Articles that might be proposed.

The ethos of the school, with its focus on outstanding teaching and a rich extra curricular experience, is immediately recognisable and in tune with the best of the independent sector in the UK. The school is inspected by ISI and a quick look at the inspection report found on the ISI website will reveal that this is a highly successful school on every front. That said, schools are all about the pupils and whenever I spend time with them during my trips to Athens, I never fail to be impressed by them – teaching them must be a great joy!

St Catherine's owes its foundation to the British Ambassador who set up a small school in the Ambassador's Residence in Athens just after the war to educate young children of diplomats. It has gone through significant changes down the years and is now a school of over 1100, from pre-prep up to sixth form. The pupil body is of diverse international background, but there are a significant number of Greek families these days that see the virtue of a British education.

Stuart Smith, the present Head, came to the post from a highly successful teaching career in the maintained sector. He read History at Oxford and is a talented sportsman having won Blues for soccer and played cricket for the University as well as in the highly competitive world of the Lancashire League. He was therefore particularly pleased when St Catherine's hosted the COBIS world games. Thanks to some very influential parents, the school was able to achieve the great coup of staging events in the 2004 Olympic Stadium! This was the first time that the Primary and Secondary

Games had been staged together, with 512 students from 28 schools taking part. But even more impressive was the school's success in another form of international competition, a triumph that might seem in some ways ironic.

The Generation Euro Students' Award is a three-round competition focusing on monetary policy, organised for international and European schools in the euro area by the European Central Bank (ECB) and, at the national level, by national central banks. It provides young people a chance to gain an insight into monetary policy decision-making and to find out more about the ECB's role and institutional set-up. It is open to students aged between 16 and 19 in the final years of their secondary education.

More than 5500 students participated in the 2014-2015 Generation Euro Students' Award and faced the first round challenge of an on-line multiple-choice test in the autumn of 2014. Over 2000 passed this hurdle and were invited to enter the second round, sat between 24th November 2014 and 6th February 2015, in which they had to write an essay making an economic and monetary analysis, as well as predicting the ECB's Governing Council interest rate decision in March 2015.

For the final round, beginning on 9th March and ending on April 14/15, at International/European level, six teams gave presentations at the ECB in Frankfurt in front of a jury made up of ECB experts from the Directorates General Economics, Research and Communications. The jury was impressed by the high standard of the students' performance and their knowledge of monetary policy and the winners were chosen on the quality of their assessment of the economic environment and policy options and their cogency in considering interest rates.

The winning St Catherine's team opted to leave interest rates unchanged and fully implement the ECB's unconventional monetary policy measures. Finally, on 6th May, 2015, ECB President Mario Draghi, together with the national central bank governors, welcomed them and the other winning teams at national and international/European levels to the European Central Bank.

In Stuart Smith's words: 'This is an amazing achievement by a very accomplished group of students. Their endeavour was matched by their sharp insight into the very real workings of economics. Such an achievement is made even more remarkable by the current economic climate in Greece and throughout the eurozone. The school is exceptionally proud of their achievement and we have no doubt that all of them will go on to make their mark in the world.'

The team consisted of Year 13 St Catherine's students: Aristeidis Grivokostopoulos, Georgios Mytilinaios, Alexandros Papanthassiou, Vardis Vardinoyannis, Michiel Milanovic.

*Roger Peel was Headmaster of Kimbolton School from 1987 to 2002 and membership secretary of HMC from 2002 to 2009.*

*St Catherine's British School.*

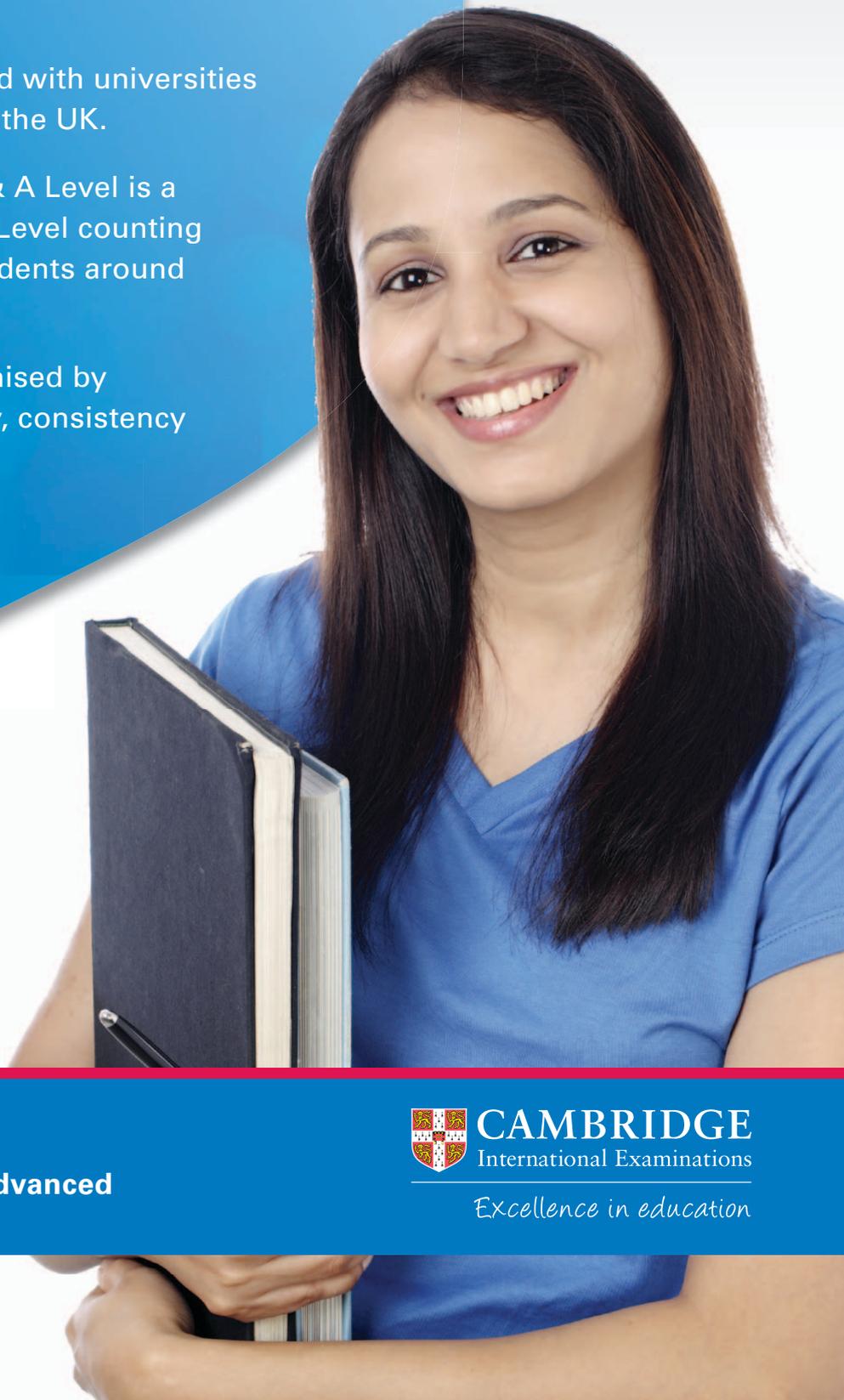


# Tried and tested qualifications for sixth form students

Cambridge Pre-U is developed with universities and taken by students across the UK.

Cambridge International AS & A Level is a flexible qualification with AS Level counting towards A Level, taken by students around the world.

Both qualifications are recognised by universities and offer stability, consistency and flexibility.



To find out more, visit  
[www.cie.org.uk/cambridgeadvanced](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgeadvanced)



*Excellence in education*

# Passport to success

Principal Toby Belfield explains the importance of readily accessible information as he crosses the world recruiting pupils for Ruthin School

One of the most important things any school must do is to create a learning environment that will encourage the best students through their doors. For a school like Ruthin, where over 60% of students come from overseas, this means attracting the right mix of boys and girls, as well as a good balance of different cultures.

I am immensely proud of the global make-up of the student cohort at Ruthin School – I firmly believe it is key to enriching our students' educational experience. But maintaining the cultural diversity of a school cannot be left to chance, which is why I believe it is my personal responsibility as Principal to handle student recruitment. As a result, I can frequently be away from school at different times throughout the academic year in places as varied as Nigeria, Russia and Vietnam. Despite this, the school achieves outstanding academic results year after year and the commitment of our leadership team and staff has been a vital element in this continued success.

As the school's bursar as well as its Principal, I have a rather unusual set of responsibilities and I need to balance these commitments whether I am at my desk in the UK or travelling to meet families abroad. Having a first-class team in school and, at the same time, tools in place that allow me to work remotely, has been essential in ensuring that the school continues to run smoothly.

The backbone of Ruthin's success, when it comes to student recruitment, is the importance we place on the efficient sharing of student and school information. We use a management information system (MIS) supplied by SIMS Independent which allows me to get up-to-the-minute data on our students' progress and see a clear picture of the school's finances wherever I am in the world.

This approach was tested during our most recent inspection, as I was in Indonesia when the inspectors called. However, when they asked for evidence of how effectively we track the performance of boys and girls and how well students



Toby  
Belfield

with English as a second language progress in comparison to their peers, staff in school could quickly pull the necessary information from our MIS and then display it in a graph in a few clicks. Our vice-Principal and the team of staff oversaw the inspection in my absence and there was no need for me to return to the UK.

The technology we use also allows me to check details of the school's cash flow and budget spend, so that I can make swift decisions about the number of places available or what additional resources the school requires to support the new intake of students. Having data such as the attendance and achievement of specific groups or individual students just a click away also makes it easier for me to showcase the quality of teaching and learning at Ruthin when I am meeting families.

I visit nearly every overseas student's family prior to their enrolment and I also take the opportunity to meet current parents in the area. The fact that the Principal has met each child and taken a personal interest in their schooling helps to maintain a strong partnership between school and family. This in turn has a positive impact on a child's progress from day one and gives their parents great confidence in our school.

As a Principal who regularly travels across the globe, my role may be unusual. But our excellent academic performance is testament that this personal approach works. With a first-class team supporting its students and the right tools to hand, schools like Ruthin really do have the world at their feet.

*Toby Belfield was appointed bursar of Ruthin School in 2008 and has been Principal since 2010.*

---

*'The backbone of Ruthin's success, when it comes to student recruitment, is the importance we place on the efficient sharing of student and school information.'*

---

# 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.

## 'Ocean of Tears' at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Year 8 pupils from the Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, have created a poignant installation entitled 'Ocean of Tears' to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. The installation consists of 503 hand-made resin teardrops, one for each Royal Hospital School pupil who is thought to have died during the war.

Mrs Debbie Hitchen, art teacher and coordinator of the project, explains the inspiration behind the piece. 'The sea must have been a painful reminder to those who lost loved ones at sea during WW1. Swallowed into its depths were the uncounted bodies of boys and men. Through archive research we have estimated that 503 former Royal Hospital School pupils were lost during the Great War.

'The known names of 200 have each been inscribed on the surface of teardrops, while other teardrops contain small pieces of art: designs of ships in dazzle camouflage; carefully drawn ghostly portraits of sailor boys; sections of hand-crafted barbed wire; fragments of ships rusted and burnt; and embroidered barnacles clinging to vintage ammunition. Each tear has been cast from moulds kindly made by Nick Maguire of Tomps Mouldings, who is himself the son of a former Royal Hospital School pupil.'

The installation can be viewed at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.





# The parents' forum

O R Houseman looks on the works of the mighty and counts his wash basins

'The discrepancy between the quality of tutoring from individual tutors is unacceptable. You are responsible for the management and performance of your tutors. Please let me know what you are doing about this.'

The housemasters received this admonitory, somewhat threatening, message from one of the deputy heads at the end of last week. There are now several deputy heads. This is partly explained by the fact that all senior roles which formerly had their own titles (for example director of studies) are now designated deputy head with their particular area of responsibility in brackets.

So the post formerly known as director of studies is now known as deputy head (academic). However, the other reason for the proliferation of deputies is the fact that there are simply more titles, and more managers; or, as they like to call themselves now, leaders. They call themselves the senior leadership team, and see little ridiculous in this.

Only cynical teachers of history or classics are amused by the increasing number of titles, offices, and administrative complexities. Those who join a senior leadership team have rarely wasted much time worrying about the administrative arcana of the *ancien regime* or the Byzantine bureaucracy of the late Roman Empire. That sort of thing does not help career progression in teaching.

However, the title does not necessarily help to identify a particular leader's particular area of responsibility. The deputy (pastoral), who is usually concerned with Child Protection issues and ensuring that each boarding house has the requisite number of wash basins to comply with the national Minimum Standards for boarding institutions, was on this occasion writing to housemasters to chastise them for discrepancies in the quality of tutoring delivered in houses.

Each pupil has a tutor, and sees this tutor twice a week: once with the rest of the tutorial group and once individually. They discuss reports, results, general academic progress. Housemasters manage a team of six tutors, and oversee the work they do with tutees. However, it seemed there was a problem.

Inconsistency is a terrible problem. Individuality and character are good things, as is an education tailored to suit the personal needs of each individual pupil. However, uniformity across houses and between tutors is also good. Inconsistency and discrepancy are bad things. There is no contradiction here if HMs manage, indeed lead their teams properly, professionally.

I tried to find out a little more from the deputy (pastoral) before chastising my tutors. I felt this was the expectation after we, HMs, had been chastised for not chastising them earlier, before they started becoming inconsistent. "There was a complaint at the parents' forum on Monday." Of course there was a complaint at the parents' forum. What else is likely to happen at a parents' forum? I did not say this out loud. Instead I asked what sort of complaint.

"A parent complained that they never hear from their child's tutor. Other parents hear every week, they have not heard at all this term. Communication with parents is vital." This is true. Parents now expect daily news about their child's progress even when away at boarding school. Children provide much of the communication themselves by phone, email, Skype.

If they are punished for a misdemeanour, or receive a bad mark, they can tell their parents instantly that they are being victimised, and their teachers are deliberately destroying their confidence by giving them bad marks. Tutors are therefore encouraged to communicate regularly with parents as much as housemasters. Some tutors write every week. Others write whenever a report is sent home. Others write when there is a problem, others when a child has done something particularly good.

Sometimes things have been fine, neither bad, nor spectacularly good, so a tutor may decide not write to the child's parents. However, here tutors are approaching the dangerous territory of inconsistency. However well they are observing, encouraging and guiding their pupil, if they do not write to parents to let them know how well they are observing, encouraging and guiding that pupil, then they are being inconsistent.

The tutor may argue that he is being consistent by not contacting parents, and the over zealous, over communicative tutor is creating the discrepancy; however, the teacher doing more is never likely to be criticised ahead of the teacher doing less, however inefficient or ineffectual that extra work may be.

"Have you spoken to your tutors about this yet?" the deputy (pastoral) asked me.

"Have any of my tutors been criticised?"

"I cannot tell you that right now."

"Well, I am entirely happy that every one of the tutors in my house is doing an excellent job. I do not want to criticise them for doing it badly until I hear that they have actually done it badly. Then, if I think the complaint is valid, I shall have a word with that tutor."

"You don't run a parents' forum for your house, do you?"

"No, I do not."

"Have you thought about doing so? Several other houses do."

"I know. They seem to create a lot of work."

"The Headmaster is very keen on them. How do you know what your parents are thinking?"

"I write to them. They write to me. Or they call me. Or they talk to me when they come into school. And I can answer their question in a way which is specific to their own circumstances and which also supports the Headmaster's policies."

"The latest parents' forum raised this issue about inconsistency in tutoring."

"If it is an issue."

"What do you mean? There was a complaint from a parent



*O R Houseman prepares for his Overseas Parents' Forum.*

about inconsistency in tutoring. We have to respond."

"Yes, that is the trouble with parents' forums: you have to respond. Does that parent who complained about inconsistency in tutoring represent the views of other parents? Does any parent represent the views of any other parent in any issue? All parents represent their own views and their own children's views. They are not interested in anyone else's views. At a parents' forum you hear the view of the noisiest parent. But by holding the forum you are now obliged to respond to that view, whether it is valid or not."

"Are you going to speak to your tutors?"

"No."

I asked another housemaster whether he held a forum for parents in his house.

"Yes. Once a term."

"Useful?"

"Nightmare. Even those who arrive quite satisfied leave with a grievance they never knew they had."

A week later the deputy (pastoral) chaired a meeting of all housemasters. Consistency of tutoring appeared half way down the agenda.

"I hope you have all responded to my comments about tutoring, and that you have spoken to your tutors."

There were plenty of views.

"My best tutor never contacts parents."

"I have a tutor who contacts parents every week. He is a hopeless tutor."

"Do we yet know who was complaining, and which house their child is in?"

The deputy (pastoral) answered: "Yes, I have investigated that complaint."

"And? Who was it?"

"I'm not going to tell you who it was, but I can tell you that the complaint was unfounded. And I have found the evidence. The tutor in question has sent an email to the child's parents every week since September. And they have received them, sometimes acknowledged them. It wasn't even a mistake. It was just a lie."

"Do we still have to speak to our tutors about contacting parents?"

"Only if you think it is necessary."

"Are you holding another parents' forum?"

The Deputy (Pastoral) looked somewhat resigned: "The Headmaster likes them."

*O R Houseman is a graduate of Lonsdale College, Oxford.*

# Dumbo's feather and other elephant jokes\*

At the start of a new academic year, Kris Spencer suggests some ways in which parents can help to support their children through revision



Kris Spencer

Schools and teachers want to work with parents to support their child's learning, especially at exam time. This drive to work together cuts both ways. The question I am most often asked by parents who want to help is, of course, "What can I do?" Such questions become more frequent and more insistent when exams approach.

Given that the urge to help and get involved in a child's work comes from the heart of good parenting – from love and concern and warmth – it is a pity that this parental support of work and revision can so often lead to arguments, standoffs and conflict.

## Getting started

For the most part the process of revision is better considered as a marathon than a sprint. This said, it is not quite as simple as 'more is better'. It is worth reminding parents that exam revision should take place after a course has finished. Reviewing notes to support and cement understanding is, of course, good practice, but starting an intensive programme of revision too early can be counterproductive. For one thing it can cut across other school work: more importantly, it puts an

extra burden on a child. Filling their every waking hour with work can lead to fatigue, anxiety and burnout.

The school will let parents know when it is appropriate to start revision. This heads up should be followed by an exam timetable and, depending on the subject, a sometimes dizzying selection of study aids – a revision timetable, past papers, notes and key questions. The aim is to help but for some pupils, and their parents, the seeming enormity and importance of what lies ahead can be daunting.

Some pupils do find it difficult to begin their revision and this can lead to arguments with concerned parents. The reality is, of course, that the child is just as worried about not starting their revision as the parents are. The task might seem so big that making that first step seems impossible: 'where to start?'

And, of course, the longer the procrastination, the harder it is to commit – 'everybody else has started, I'll never catch up'. One of the things that a parent can do in such a circumstance is to help to kick-start the process. I advise that pupils start revision by getting their notes in order. Ideally, this would happen before study leave when the child is still at school.

*Revision: getting down to it.*



The approach is for them to file their existing notes for each subject according to topic, in readiness for revision. To do this they will need a syllabus and file dividers. If they are missing notes then these will need to be sourced. I suspect that every child has a pile of papers on a shelf or in some corner, sedimentary in nature and unconsolidated by subject or topic.

The pile must be addressed for it can take on the importance of Poe's tell-tale heart – 'nervous, very very dreadfully nervous'. My advice is to deal with the pile, first off file what you can and what cannot be matched to an appropriate topic and divider should be thrown away. Yes, thrown away; there is an energy and freeing up and release to be to be gained from such spring cleaning and decluttering.

### Contracts and negotiation

There is a temptation to throw rewards and prizes at your children in order to encourage them to work. Such approaches can work if used creatively. A spell on Facebook might be the reward for a certain amount of revision time, for instance. It is definitely worth thinking about *negotiated* rewards. What a parent might think that their child wants may not tally with what would actually help them.

Looking at things in more detail, I have something else to suggest. I wonder if the following scenario is familiar. Your child comes home and after a certain amount of bag-dropping and snack-gathering, they move to their room – and the rest is a mystery to you. As a parent, you want to know what your child is doing. Are they working or are they on their computer or phone chatting to friends or playing games?

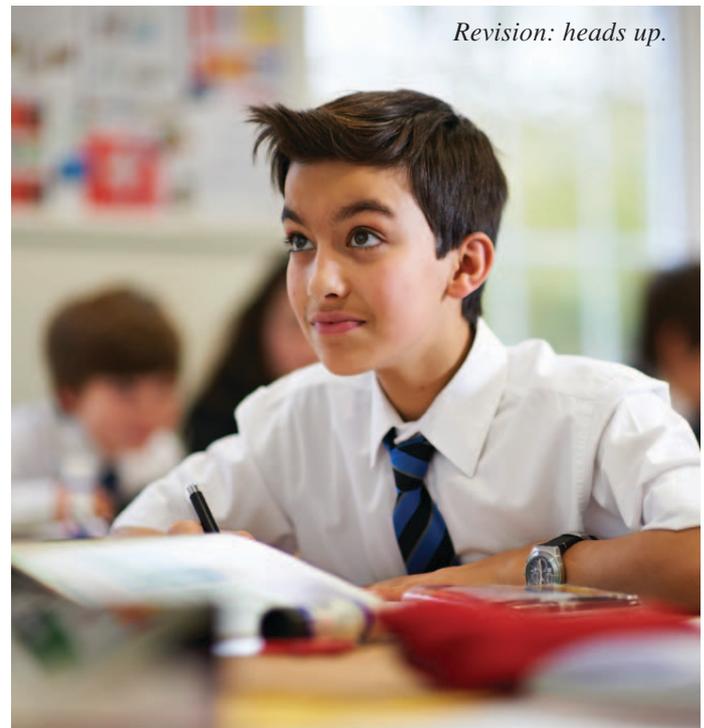
Questions, shouted up, result in silence or confrontation: "Are you working?" "Of course." "Show me!" "You won't understand!"

As a remedy which supports both you and your child I suggest the following approach. First, negotiate an appropriate time for formal work to begin. The word *formal* is important here: this must be work without the distractions of TV or Facebook or smart phone. Before your child moves on to work they should tell you what work they will be doing. The important thing here is that they tell you, specifically, what they intend to do, the idea being that by telling you the task, (essentially what they are going to do over an evening before they do it), they are setting up a contract of sorts which they are much more likely to stick to and show you when it is done. The premise is simple, if we tell somebody we are going to do something, then we feel duty-bound to complete the task.

### Unfreezing and unblocking

Even the most well run of revision programmes can come unstuck by what we might call 'the freeze'. This is that certain paralysis that comes from a mixture of tiredness and ambition, and that realisation of just how big is the task in hand. It is wholly understandable that, when faced by the weight of work that is involved in exam revision, some pupils short circuit and shout out 'too much'! The problem is, of course, that such a feeling is not a great supporter of revision.

In these circumstances, we need to unblock and free things up in order to get back on track. These are matters of perception and mind games. Believe me, and here I issue a blanket absolution, all is fair when dealing with the freeze. You probably know the children's trick question 'how do you eat an elephant?' and the answer – 'one bite at a time!' and in



*Revision: heads up.*

this case, of course, the elephant is the seeming enormity of the task at hand. You may need to reassure your child that all revision helps.

It will help here to break down the task into bite-size pieces. This is not about subjects or even topics, but specific tasks – achievable and conceivable. A good tip when dealing with the freeze is to suggest to your child that they choose work that they feel secure with, something that they know they can do. This may even mean returning to a topic that they have already revised in order to get going again.

It is also important that parents and children do not panic if they miss something on the revision timetable. The world gets in the way sometimes, and it is fine to readjust, reset the goals and then move forward. Also, when a child is well and truly stuck, it helps if a parent plans with them one small thing to do in detail – when they will start, where they will sit, what do they need, how long it will take; it all helps them to actually imagine themselves doing it.

### Dumbo's feather

Sometimes you will need to supply what we might call 'Dumbo's feather' to deal with the freeze. You will remember, in the Disney cartoon, the circus mouse gives Dumbo a magic feather which allows him to fly. The feather is, of course, a ruse, it is Dumbo's big ears that are doing the flying and he had them all along. But the feather serves the important purpose of giving Dumbo the confidence to commit and take the plunge. Let me suggest one possible feather that a worried parent might use to deal with an anxious child – food.

Research suggests that protein is brain food. It is all linked to neurotransmitters in the brain, to amino acids and serotonin. Other foods, rich in Omega 3, have also been linked to brain function. Milk, eggs, salmon, nuts and seeds, avocados, blueberries and porridge all have a brain-boosting function. The physiological effects might be minimal, but the comfort of knowing that a breakfast of scrambled eggs and smoked salmon or even a handful of nuts is feeding their brain, might



*Revision: close focus.*

be just the stimulus that your child needs. From this list of brain foods any number of breakfast boosts and snacks can be created. For an anxious child, overfaced by revision they might also be the perfect anti-freeze.

### **Routines and supporting success**

While on the subject of food, I asked some of my pupils what their parents did to help them work over the exam period. All agreed that being fed was high up on the list. Successful examinees, like marching armies it would seem, are gastropods.

“My mum tells me when we’re eating. She also tells me how long it will take. She knows I need food and I’m looking forward to it but she doesn’t expect me to hang around too long because she knows I need to get back to work. It’s like we are in it together. It helps,” one boy told me.

Food is clearly important, but so is adapting to the rhythm of your child’s working habits. During study leave, when a pupil has the whole day to revise, think about the best time to start. You may be an early riser, but forcing a teenager to get up too early may not be the best thing. Six hours of revision during the day – and I mean working revision without the breaks and the cups of tea and trips to the fridge – is a reasonable goal. Working these six hours into a routine might well be the most important thing you can do to help.

The chunking and the timing may well depend on the kind of work your child is doing. Condensing notes, for example, is less taxing, for the most part, than rote learning of vocabulary. If your child is practising with past papers under exam conditions – a key skill – then the timings are set and you will need to work around them. It is also worth remembering that what worked for you when you revised might not necessarily work for your son or daughter. Also, remember that just because you have a house in the Dordogne, it does not follow that you are an expert in GCSE French. There is a tendency to fall back on the ‘it was much harder in my day’ approach to

support, or even ‘don’t do it that way, do it this way’. Aim to be curious and celebratory rather than controlling.

### **Top tips**

So, when exams approach, here are some tips to help your child and you cope with, and even enjoy, the exam game.

#### *Listen*

Listening, actively, is an important skill for parents and teachers to master. Our tendency when faced with anxiety or even tears, is to suggest, instantly and sometimes unthinkingly, a solution. I continue to be surprised by the number of unhappy children who seem to find solutions to their unhappiness if I allow them to unload without too much from me other than an ‘mmm’ or ‘why do you think that?’

#### *Articulate*

The words we use to tell our children what we consider to be important are significant. “I expect you to get nine A stars”, may seem to a parent to be supportive. You think you are saying “I know you are good enough to get great results – I believe in you.”

What your child hears, however, might feel not so much supportive as challenging. ‘If I don’t get nine A stars I’ll have failed and everybody will be disappointed in me.’ Far better to place the emphasis on effort rather than results. “I know you will work hard and do your best” might well be a better way of showing your support.

#### *Relaxation*

We all work better if we feel in control and anxiety is often the result of a feeling that we have lost control. One way of regaining control and reducing anxiety is by relaxing. Relaxation strategies, like deep breaths or clearing the mind, can help and so can activities that take us out of ourselves – baking a cake or playing sport, for instance. I had one pupil who swore that planting some herbs and tending them over

study leave had kept him calm when the elephant seemed too big to eat and the big freeze threatened.

### *Resilience*

Try to normalize your child's set-backs. Help them to see they are not abnormal in having difficulties in life. Help them to see that problems can be solved. Encourage young people to keep things in perspective – the problem is usually confined to only one part of their lives. Remind them that learning is often frustrating. Encourage your child to persist and believe they can get there.

### *Support*

Help them to see that there are people who care about them and can give them help and advice when needed. Create a positive

environment that emphasises the importance of relationships and a sense of purpose. When anxious or unhappy or simply bamboozled by a question, remind them that there is more to life than the way they feel at that moment.

Above all remember the value of humour – laughing can be a great release and it brings families together. Your care and your warmth and a sense of perspective are the greatest gifts you can give your child.

*Kris Spencer is an assistant head at Latymer Upper School and a governor and director at Notting Hill Prep School.*

[\*The elephant joke was a common form of children's humour in the 1960s, taking the form of an apparently serious question with an absurd answer such as Question: How does an elephant get down from a tree? Answer: Sit on a leaf and wait for Autumn. You had to be there. Ed]

# Teachers – society's corset

*In which are practised the arts of foxiness and hedgehoggerly, as Christopher Martin explains*

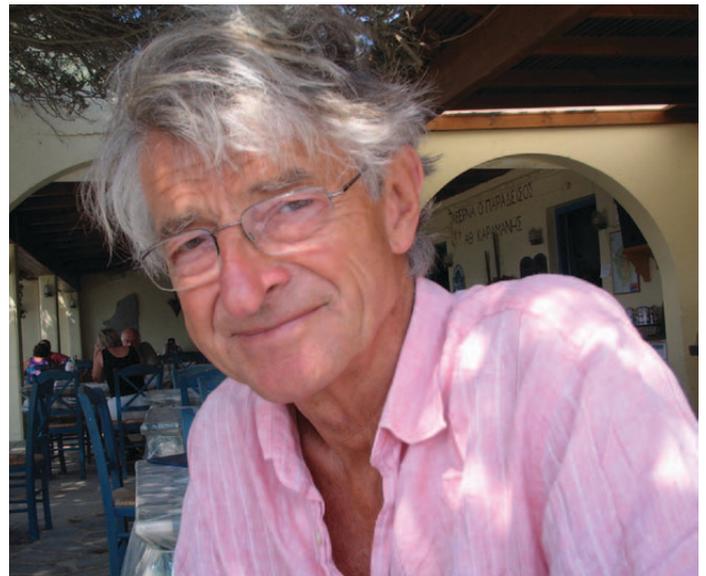
Teachers have always resented the intrusion of experts in their classes. Perhaps they feel that experts are overrated, let alone over paid. Perhaps they go along with the view that they fail to understand the magic of teaching where frogs are turned into princes and princesses awake. After all, they say, X is merely an unknown factor and a spurt is a drip under pressure.

New requirements from the Centre have been reaching schools in such volume for years now that it has been suggested that any postman with a school on his rounds should be issued with an NHS surgical truss. Heads' desks are being reinforced to accommodate the weight of new directives from Those who Know What's Needed.

It is commonly assumed that successive education ministers have 17 ideas before breakfast, all based on the sequence, 'Ready, fire, aim.' Even Peter Newsome, when he was director of the Inner London Education Authority, was constantly frustrated by the remorseless interference of faceless bureaucrats. "Progress here," he said, "has the engine of a lawnmower and the brakes of a Juggernaut truck."

As an example, he cited the sum of money that he had laboriously squirreled away over time to fund nursery schools on his patch, only to discover that Health & Safety required all his schools to introduce fire doors in all corridors, the cost of which exactly equalled his nest egg. "Not only did our schools continue not to be burnt down once these doors were in place, but in the first month 13 children suffered broken limbs from doors closing prematurely."

The Health & Safety Executive has certainly never taken seriously Winston Churchill's challenge that 'There is no better thing to do than taking risks with the young.' Caution seems to be the watchword for much of the educational advice issued to schools these days. Every time a child is injured or worse on an adventure training scheme, there will be dozens of teachers around the country who will, understandably, swear never to risk such a thing by taking an expedition themselves,



*Christopher Martin*

thus contributing to the closure of openings for youngsters to extend themselves outside the safety of the classroom.

The safe way is so often the wrong way. Kurt Hahn of course appreciated this more than most, and the Outward Bound movement is his legacy which still acts as a model to other comparable schemes today. The obverse of this coin is neatly illustrated by Don Quixote when he fashioned his own helmet out of bits of metal he had managed to accumulate. He decides to test it by running headlong and head first against a wall. Sadly, the helmet disintegrates on impact and the Don reels back, stunned and mortified. However, with characteristic persistence, he resolves to rebuild the helmet. Only this time he does not test it.

A healthy reluctance to accept authority when it is forced upon them by the Centre characterises many teachers. If at any

*'It is commonly assumed that successive education ministers have 17 ideas before breakfast, all based on the sequence, 'Ready, fire, aim.' Even Peter Newsome, when he was director of the Inner London Education Authority, was constantly frustrated by the remorseless interference of faceless bureaucrats. "Progress here," he said, "has the engine of a lawnmower and the brakes of a Juggernaut truck."*

---

time they were to feel bruised by the big battalions, they might take heart from this maritime radio exchange at night released by the US navy in 1995.

Voice 1. "Please divert your course 15 degrees south to avoid a collision."

Voice 2. "Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees north to avoid a collision."

Voice 1. "This is the captain of a US navy ship. I say again, divert your course."

Voice 2. "No. I say again, you divert YOUR course."

Voice 1. "This is the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*. We are a large warship of the US navy. Divert your course NOW."

Voice 2. "This is a lighthouse. Your call."

Teachers have to be all things to all men. They cannot merely teach their chosen subject; they have to teach pupils as well. Right brain driven people – more often than not, women – find this multi-tasking easier than those driven by the left brain – mostly men. Those in whom the *corpus calosum* is thicker make these connections more naturally and such people are inevitably women.

In his essay *The Fox and the Hedgehog*, Isaiah Berlin quotes Archilochus. 'The Fox knows many things, but the Hedgehog knows one big thing.' He then divides the great luminaries in European culture into those practising foxiness and those practising hedgehogery. Plato, Nietzsche, Proust are all hedgehogs, relating as they do everything to one single, central vision.

On the other hand Molière, Goethe, Balzac and, pre-eminently, Shakespeare are foxes, having diverse, versatile, multifaceted minds, seizing on a vast variety of experiences without seeking to refer it all to a single all-embracing vision. Inevitably, teachers are foxes. There is of course a need for

both tunnel vision and the broad span, but Berlin's theory can initiate a wonderful set of 'What if...' conversations.

What if, for instance, Galileo had been a sports fan, had stuck to making compasses and small arms, had ten children and spent his evenings raising funds for refugees from the 30 Years' War? Would we then still think that we were the centre of the universe? It's galling for us foxes to realise that almost every name of those who have made most impact on history, in any field we can think of, always seem to practise hedgehogery.

Yet we foxes certainly have our role, broadening perspectives, bridging gaps, enriching lives. No community could flourish without foxes. Really it's in the doing that we justify our lives. Those tempted to study the behavioural sociology of mugging on the Jericho road have a contribution to make, but it's the Samaritans, who get stuck in, who are the glue holding society together.

The human race seems to have a Gadarene instinct for bureaucratic change whenever the pace of life slackens sufficiently to make time for it. In the first century AD, Caius Petronius pinpointed the downside of this which has resonance with us all, even today. 'Whenever we need to develop, we reorganise. This causes confusion and disarray at all levels of society.' Unfortunately he seems to have been unable to reverse this trend and finally committed suicide.

Nearly two millennia later, the Earl of Salisbury echoed him in an entreaty to Queen Victoria. "Change? We don't need change. Things are bad enough as they are." Beating in the heart of the average educationist is a pathological distrust of change, which must be resisted to one's last breath. The Black Death is seen as preferable. This even applies in some measure to generals in the Foreign Legion, one of whom, Marshall McMahon, was inspecting a new intake and encountered a Nigerian. The general assessed the situation and decided to tackle it full on.

*"Alors, vous êtes nègre."*

The legionnaire was unfazed. *"Oui, mon général."*

Content that the situation was under control, the general delivered an instruction. *"Alors, continuez comme ça."*

Constant change is often blamed by the teaching profession for all its ills, and no doubt it has its place in the litany of confusing components which are strewn in the path of even the most resolute teacher. From time to time however, some variations on conventional themes prove more welcome than others.

Staff rooms round the country were electrified on one occasion by an advertisement in the *TES* for a Rotating Second Mistress. Yet, as an American General has observed, "If you don't like change, you're gonna like irrelevance a helluva lot less." The opposite of change may turn out to be stability – nothing wrong with that – but this should never become an end in itself for then it tends to become synonymous with complacency. Especially when laurels are handed out, the temptation to rest on them must be resisted.

*Christopher Martin started teaching at Westminster School and became Headmaster of Bristol Cathedral School and then of Millfield. He is the author of Head over heels, an account of his last four years as Headmaster there, and he also compiled Millfield – A school for all seasons, a collection of Millfield memories and anecdotes.*

# 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.

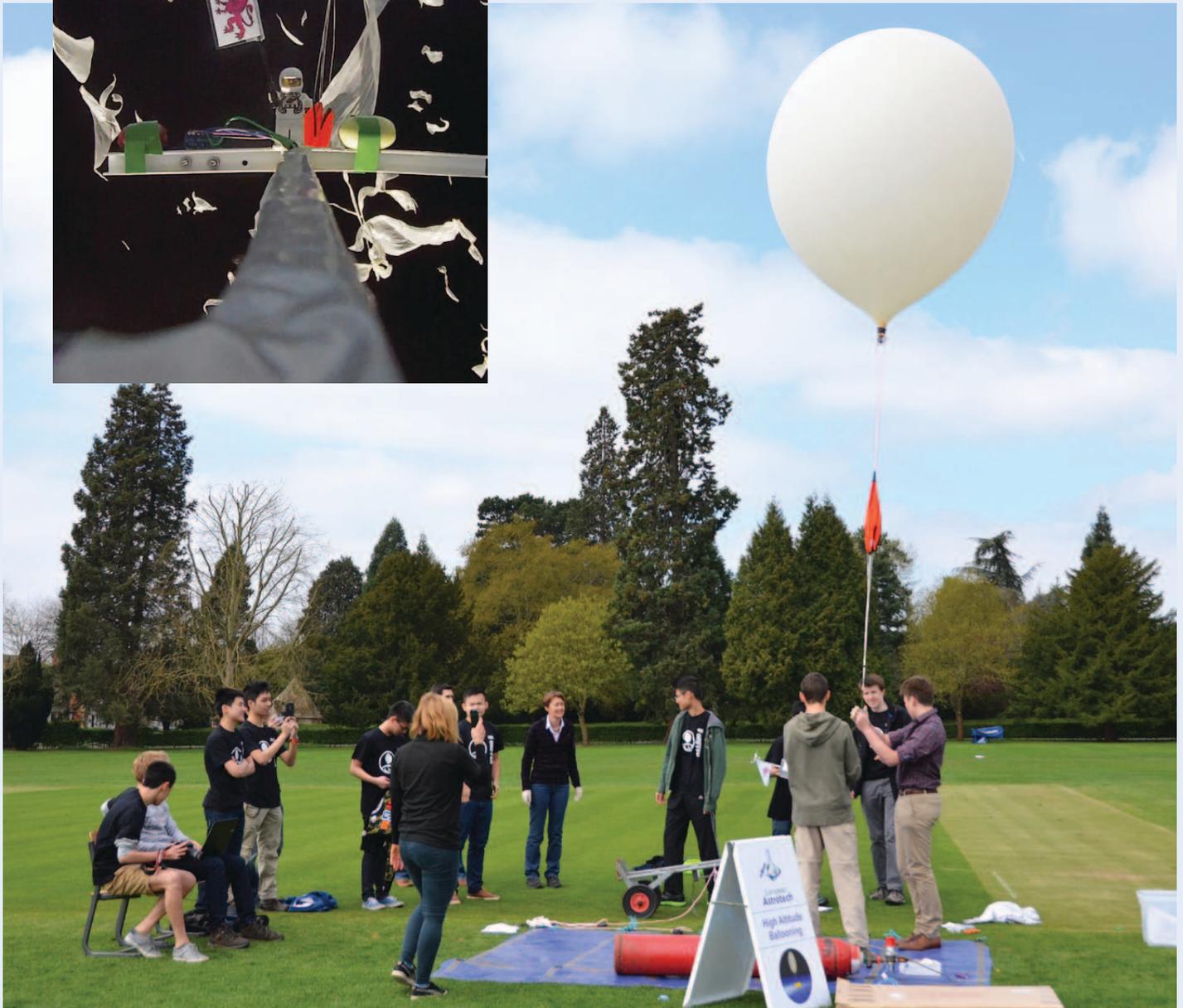
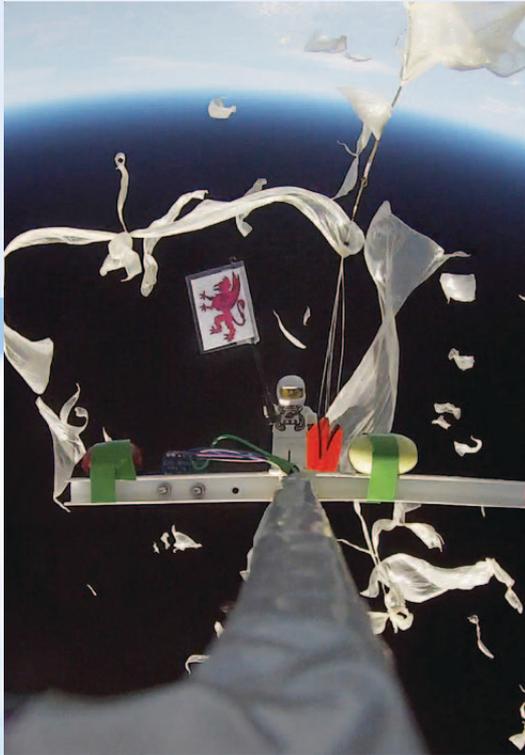
## Abingdon School launches space balloon

Abingdon School gathered at morning break to see the launch of a high altitude balloon, named 'The Griffen', designed and built by 12 lower sixth physicists, with expert guidance from European Astrotech, a leading company in the space industry.

The balloon had been designed to climb to the edge of space (around 30,000m) and return to earth later that day. The boys tracked the balloon's progress, and were ready in a minibus to collect it from the landing site. The balloon landed between Standlake and Aston, around 12km from the School. The maximum height reached was 29,410m and the temperature at burst was -39.6 degrees C.

The balloon carried a payload with a variety of experiments. As well as the GPS module transmitting information on position over a radio link to the ground station, there were measurements of temperature, humidity and air pressure.

Pupils designed experiments to study the change in colour (that is blueness due to Rayleigh Scattering) of the sky, and also the change in UV levels with altitude. The sensors collecting this information were connected to a Raspberry Pi and along with video footage from two GoPros, there was a large amount of data to analyse.





# Emotional solvency is more important than money in the bank

Tracy Shand asks what's the balance in your school? Overdrawn or an investment opportunity?

In tough times, we all know that resources need to be allocated carefully to move your school forward. It is important to remain competitive in such a difficult independent school market. Consider for a moment – what is your highest cost per month? Yes, it's your people. From the ground up, every member of your staff adds value to your school community. Each member of staff and what they say and do is marketing your school to prospective new staff and students. But are they adding the correct value you need to be a successful school in difficult times?

As a personal development specialist, I follow a number of thought leaders such as Tony Robbins and Steven Covey, and integrate their wisdom into my front line practice. One aspect of the work by Steven Covey has had a major impact on my professional practice and all it takes is time, paper and a pen. So let us begin – what do successful people have?

The word success means different things to different people, so your answer could be 'happiness' or 'following your passion'. However, there is one answer you are most likely to hear and that is 'money' – a big bank account! We all know how a bank account works: we put money in by making a deposit; we may save it up for that special something; or, when we need money, we take it out. But this transactional process can be a powerful tool to empower our communities in a quite different way. Take a moment to think about the idea of an emotional bank account.

An emotional bank account is a metaphor that describes the amount of trust that's been built up in a relationship. It's the feeling of safeness you have with another human being.

*Steven Covey*

If we consider a day in our life as an education professional, we have a number of areas in which we need to work to ensure that our school community is cared for. Whether it is a new parent, a member of the team or a nervous new student, the idea of investing in their emotional bank account is simple and adds value to your school at no cost. The concept is all-embracing since it does not matter what role you have in your school, a deposit is a deposit whether you are 5, 15 or 55. The process works wherever there is interaction with people and wherever a level of trust can be developed.

Our aim as a school community is to have a large number of deposits so that we can be happy and successful and to keep the withdrawals as low as possible. By far the easiest way to

think of this is in terms of positive and negative behaviour. For example, a deposit could be kind words, making the tea when it gets busy, keeping a promise, a smile, a reassuring nod when people are having problems, or a compliment. A withdrawal could be gossiping, putting people down or making a commitment to someone that you do not keep.

Steven Covey identifies six major ways that you can make deposits to ensure that your school communities have a healthily positive balance. See what you think.

## Understand the person

Take some time to understand your whole school community. As Steven would say, 'seek first to understand, then to be understood'. Remember that we all have our maps of the world, so take some time to step into their shoes to get the full picture. What one small thing could you do today to put a deposit into someone's account?

## Keep commitments

A commitment is a promise. If we make a promise to a person or team and break it, we are making a serious withdrawal and trust will be affected. Take time to listen and plan, and if you can't do it, say so, delegate or fall back on plan B.

## Attend to little things

A smile, a compliment or, the best gift of all, taking time to really listen – such small things bring comfort to anyone and constitute valuable deposits. Think about the little things you can do for your team or your students to make things easier for them. The little things really do count.

## Clarify expectations

It would be nice if we were all mind-readers, but we are not. Communication is key and sometimes it is good to talk rather than type, click and move on. We all see things differently and a new member of our community may not know what to do or what is going on.

## Personal integrity

This point explains itself. We need trust to make our relationships thrive.

## Apologise when we make a withdrawal

We are all human and make mistakes, it's life. In our demanding jobs, we sometimes make a withdrawal without realising it, as we get busy and tired. Take time to talk, sooner rather than later, and apologise sincerely. Once the trust level is low, communication and teamwork will not take place. In

any workplace, people value relationships above everything else.

The biggest asset that any senior manager has is their team, so making deposits and minimising withdrawals from their emotional bank account with you will help that relationship to improve steadily. Do you know what each member of your team values most highly about their job? And do you know what gives them most grief? Step into their shoes to see things from their point of view. What do they value as the highest deposit, and what is the withdrawal they find most worrying?

Making deposits is not difficult and it costs nothing but time. Be nice. Perform a random act of kindness. Appreciate your team. Try recording your emotional bank account in

terms of your professional practice. Just get some paper, split in two – plus and minus – and record your impact. Does it match what you think is happening?

Take every ‘investment’ opportunity you can to maintain and improve the emotional balance of your community and encourage others to do the same.

*Tracy Shand, who teaches maths, is the editor of i.boarding and an experienced boarding professional, currently working in Asia. She has presented sessions at boarding school associations’ conferences in Australia and New Zealand and her forthcoming book, Boardingology – The Power of 1, is due out in December 2015.*

## 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.



### Grape expectations

Buckswood School has just taken delivery of a dry white and sparkling wine, made from grapes grown, nurtured and picked by students on the school’s own vineyard located on the estate. Under the watchful eye and expert guidance of local award-winning wine producer Carr-Taylor Vineyards, this year’s wine, the second from the vineyard, is getting better with age, as the vines mature and the flavour of the wine improves.

The vineyard was planted five years ago on the Guestling estate in Sussex with the Ortega grape to produce a dry white wine. Over the course of the last five years, with the variations in weather, the vineyard has grown and established itself as a fine cropper, with the first harvest being turned into 500 bottles of a dry white last year. With a bumper harvest this year, 750 bottles have been produced and sold at various school events, with all the donations going to the school’s Swaziland charity which contributes towards water projects, education and healthcare in the kingdom.

In addition to the Ortega grapes, this year saw the planting of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay varieties. So this year the school has also produced its first sparkling white wine, Buckswood Bubbles.

# Into the emailstrom

John Weiner feels the need for webbed feet as the tide rises



Technology is fantastic isn't it? It allows us to access the outside world from the comfort of our classroom PC or tablet, making it easier than ever to bring lessons to life with up to date materials, videos and other wonderful resources.

This increased accessibility has allowed us to speed up communication with our peers in other schools, so

that sharing good practice is almost as simple as Googling the topic you're planning. Technological progress has also brought about huge changes in the internal channels of communication now seen in schools as well. Bigger and better databases help us to meet individual pupil needs more effectively, for example by enabling us to quickly log and access information on pastoral and academic issues. All good progress, right?

By and large, yes. But there is one particular bit of the web-enabled world we live in that is coming under more and more scrutiny as each year passes, namely our trusty old friend email. Having effectively decimated postal services in the western world (when was the last time you wrote someone a letter?), email has become ubiquitous, popping up on our computers, tablets and smartphones wherever we are and at all hours of the day and night. Is this an example of a disruptive technology that has improved productivity by greasing the wheels of communication in schools and businesses alike, or has it taken over?

A recent study by O2 Business reckons that the average worker spends 36 days every year composing emails. That wouldn't be so bad in itself if these emails were actually productive (some of course are), but a large proportion is actually just the email equivalent of white noise. For example, emails copying in 15 colleagues, those endless 'reply alls', whole staff messages that apply to only some, messages repeating what you've just been told in a meeting, or even emails saying 'thanks' (polite maybe, but necessary?). Any of those ring a bell?

The consequences of this email tidal wave that teachers in our schools are facing can actually be decreasing productivity in three main ways.

The most immediate challenge is the process of separating the wheat from the chaff. It's much easier to miss the important emails if they are hidden away amongst hundreds of other less vital messages, and this can mean colleagues not

getting the responses they need or frustrated parents, which reflects badly on both the teacher and the school.

But going through that crowded in-box takes time as well as discrimination, time that would be better and more properly spent on activities that add value to our pupils' learning, such as lesson preparation and marking. Forty-five minutes spent grooming these insatiable on-line creatures means that 10% of a teacher's theoretically eight-hour day has been spent staring at a screen. Finally there is the stress element, whereby teachers now find themselves checking work emails at evenings and weekends.

There may well be an official school policy that they don't have to respond in their 'off-time', but the alternative of facing an even more heavily laden inbox on Monday morning might make it the lesser of two evils. The danger is that teachers never truly switch off from their work, which may have contributed to increasing stress levels in an already full-on environment.

So what can be done? Email is a part of life as we know it, isn't it? Well Professor Sir Cary Cooper has a different take and suggested in a recent speech to the British Psychological Society that firms may want to consider shutting down servers outside of office hours to prevent workers accessing their emails. Although he later toned down those comments as 'pretty extreme', he did add that if email was affecting employee health, then it was 'an option'.

One firm, however, has taken his views on board. Atos, ironically an IT services firm, banned all internal emails, and claims to have seen productivity rise considerably, through more face to face meetings and an internal social media style application that allows for communication without as many of the negative side effects of email.

Independent schools are unlikely to resort to such extreme measures to manage staff email use effectively, but it does give food for thought as to how school leaders can ensure that staff are aided by technology and not swamped by it. Better training in areas such as inbox management, guidance on use of the 'cc' bar in emails and even a recognition that time must be allocated for email admin to all staff, not just those in positions of responsibility, would help.

Wellbeing programmes, which are happily growing ever greater in number and quality for our pupils could also be considered for staff. Work/life balance is central for any independent school wishing to get the best out of its teachers and email is one of the key drivers that tip the scales from life to work outside the classroom.

It must also be recognised that this is an issue that is only likely to get worse as the years go by. More use of IT by pupils, with iPad roll outs and BYOD programmes, will see email traffic increase considerably, and the best prepared schools will be the ones that are able to maintain the positives without overloading their staff. Solutions will not be easy to find, but engaging with staff to ascertain their views and concerns is a key first step to identifying ways to move forward. Maybe you could send round an email...

*John Weiner teaches at Caterham School and is the author of [The SMT Spy](http://TheSMTSpy.com), a blog on leadership in schools ([smtspy.blogspot.co.uk](http://smtspy.blogspot.co.uk)).*

# Communication and culture

Geran Jones is concerned by the linguistic blight afflicting our schools

One of the scenes in Godard's film *Alphaville* reveals that everyday life in the futurist city is regulated by language. More precisely, only those words can be used which are contained in an ever-shrinking, official dictionary. This Orwellian dystopia of a population revelling in thought control seemed quite remote when the film was released in 1965. Fifty years on, the hero, Lemmy Caution, could observe a society which similarly sets great store by logic, mathematics and science, yet one which seems less concerned by the impoverishment of self-expression. The problem is not simply concerned with the words and expressions of language, but the interface and complementary nature of language and culture.

These days, children are no longer afforded the chance to remember by heart long poems or folk stories that were once the cement of a common heritage. Committing nursery rhymes or poetry to memory makes them part of the cadence and rhythms of thought and speech; it underpins the culture and language of society. As the author found in a recent survey, many bright young things had never heard of *Sing a Song of Sixpence* or *Baa Baa Black Sheep*.

A contemptuous reader may observe that decimalisation and the overzealous war on racism may be responsible for the demise of these cultural relics. Moreover, myths and Grimm's *Fairy Tales* fare no better in the modern pantheon of knowledge, perhaps because they have been deemed too frightening for the modern child. Knowledge of the Bible, the cornerstone of Western civilization, can no longer be taken for granted. Few are familiar with Jacob, Daniel, Samson or Job. Judas, too, is now a stranger. Those stories which used to contribute to the basis of a common culture are no longer being passed on, and with them, part of the rich fabric of language has become detached. The cultural seed has fallen on stony ground.

Culture and language are inextricably intertwined; they serve not just as the bridge between the past and the present, but help determine our understanding of the world around us. The digital age is subverting language with images. Knowledge and experience are apt to be downloaded via the electronic screen, rather than accrued through life and social context. A generation brought up in cyberspace may have lost the connection between the real and its representation.

The computer has redefined social interaction: users work in isolation,

spending increasing amounts of time updating a social media page, cultivating virtual friends, or tweeting comments that serve no purpose other than fulfilling the need to tweet, a substitute for face-to-face interaction. Baudrillard's observation that we are losing the ability to make sense of the distinction between reality and representation remains valid.

Of course, that is not to condemn a whole generation to Plato's cave. But the task of educating the next generation to become thinking, fully functioning citizens has become more challenging. One example of this is in the national attitude to foreign language learning. What better way to drag young people out of the dark cave of insularity than to allow them to bask in the sunlight of another culture?

Arguments often put forward that languages are 'hard', or that we live in an English-speaking world and there is no need to learn another language, appear ill-informed, supercilious and patronising. Britons are no worse at



Who are these people?

## Learning and languages

learning languages than any other nation and rather better than many.

The reality of doing business in today's world, as a number of senior executives have told the author, requires excellent inter-personal skills, the ability to understand the culture and mind-set of other countries, and having functional ability in a foreign language is a distinct asset.

Interestingly, this is filtering through to appointments at board level of multinationals; companies are looking to foreign speakers of English to provide them with the skill set that seems to be absent from the British market. Knowing the local language is often the key that unlocks the door. An insular mind-set is not an option for graduates coming on to the labour market.

The ability for business people to succeed in foreign markets, or for diplomatic initiatives to gain traction, is dependent on the capacity to gain local knowledge and expertise in order to inform policy-making. It is no secret that the misreading of Russia over the Ukraine crisis has its roots in the loss of deep political and cultural knowledge at the FCO. Reliance on analysts does not make up for the shortage of Russian speakers who could give well-informed advice.

Similarly, there is a dearth of Arabic speaking diplomats to support strategy in confronting the complex developments in the Middle East. This country's linguists can rest assured that they have a bright future!

Society has undergone major changes, notably over a generation. The internet, globalism, the increase of emigration and immigration, and mutating rules about acceptable speech have weakened the sense of difference between cultures, tribes, social groups. The danger to the community is one of increased individualism, the retreat into the private sphere, at the expense of engagement as a citizen in society.

Social isolation, however, should not be promoted by linguistic and cultural myopia, especially in the field of education. A deep awareness of language and history is as essential as numerical and scientific knowledge. These elements are at the heart of developing the social and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to respond to wider cultural changes, which tomorrow's leaders will require.

*Geran Jones teaches French, German and Russian at Westminster School where he is also the editor of The Camden Magazine.*

## 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.

### Hereford Cathedral School wins Songs of Praise choir title

Hereford Cathedral School's Cantabile Girls' Choir won the BBC Songs of Praise Senior School Choir of the Year Competition 2015, beating some of the finest school choirs from across the UK. The 17 female singers from Hereford Cathedral School were accompanied by fellow pupil Laurence John and Cantabile Director Jo Williamson at Nottingham's Albert Hall in the final of the competition.

Competing against choirs from Twyford Church of England High School and Strathearn School Chamber Choir, the choir sang *The Skylark* to clinch the title. Although the School's Cantabile choir have reached the finals before and have won the international Eisteddfod on two separate occasions, this is the first time they have won the BBC Songs of Praise competition.

Paul Smith, Headmaster of Hereford Cathedral School said: "I am naturally delighted for the pupils, their families and for all the staff associated with this choir. They have worked very hard and their effort, commitment and determination has been rewarded with

success at the International Eisteddfod, winning their section twice and reaching the finals of the World Choir competition, and now being named the 2015 BBC Songs of Praise Youth Choir of the Year.

"Whilst our Cathedral choristers are used to performing for the BBC, and even Royalty, there are no girl choristers at Hereford, and so it is marvellous that the school is also able to produce choirs of Cantabile's expertise and quality."





Cat  
Scutt

# Play up! Play up! And play the game!

Cat Scutt examines what our students are learning when they play digital games

The idea that learning takes place in games is not a new one. The importance of play for children's development has been identified by some of the most influential developmental psychologists of the last century, with games providing a safe place for children to explore, take on roles and test out new ideas.

As play has moved from the physical space to the digital space, so interest in the potential of games for learning has begun to focus on digital games. Digital games are a huge industry, and with the majority of today's schoolchildren growing up with regular access to games on consoles, PCs and mobile phones, it is worth us thinking about what – and how – they are learning when they play digital games.

That learning is an inherent feature of playing a digital game is hard to debate; the game designer Raph Koster argues that it is actually learning that makes a game fun, suggesting that 'fun' and 'learning' are virtually synonymous. Certainly, learning the rules of the game and what is required to progress within it – usually through trial and error, rather than by reading the instructions – are core processes of game-playing. However, the learning that takes place in digital games is much broader than simply learning how to play the game itself.

Whilst different types of games – for example strategy, puzzle or role-play games – will evoke different types of learning, and a player's style of play will also exert significant influence over their learning from the game (Richard Bartle's popular categorisation of player motivation in multiplayer online games suggests that game players will tend towards one of the roles of killer, achiever, explorer or socialiser), learning from games can be loosely grouped into two areas: dispositions and content.

Dispositions can be defined as a player's characteristics, attitudes or behaviours, and these will usually be generalisable across contexts. Since games are frequently structured around the concept of solving a series of problems or overcoming challenges, it is unsurprising that one of the dispositions that is identified as a key learning point from games is problem solving. The types of problem being solved may vary quite dramatically between *Candy Crush Saga*, *Angry Birds* and *Counter Strike*, but in each case the player learns – through extensive practice – how to achieve goals and progress through the game.

In addition, popular multi-player online games such as *League of Legends* and *World of Warcraft* develop co-operation and collaboration in their players, since they almost without exception require the player to work as part

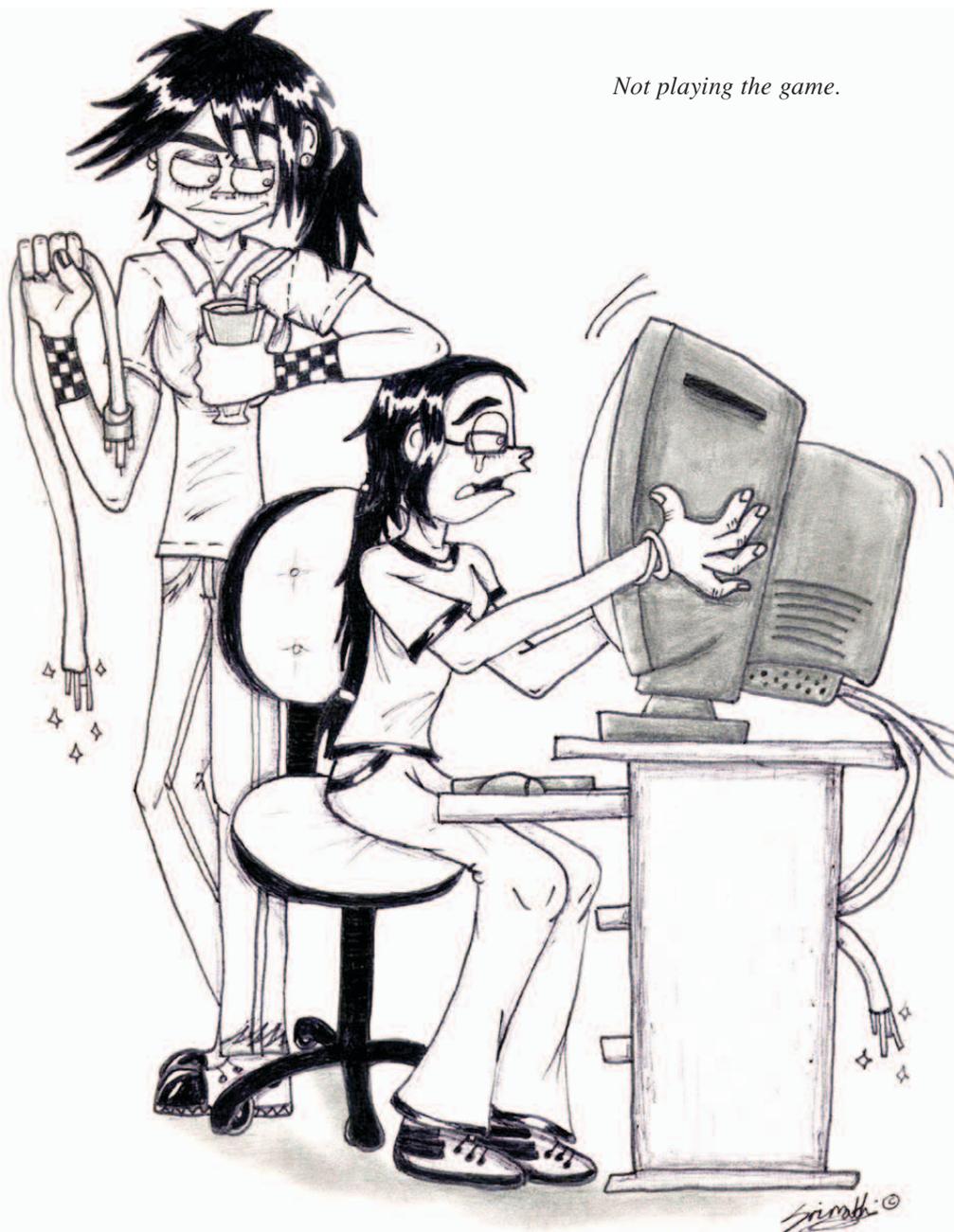
of a team beyond the earliest stages. Even when playing single-player or competitive multi-player games, players will collaborate with other players through forums and online communities in order to take advantage of their expertise, discover cheat codes, and share their experiences.

Looking at the impact of gaming on wider dispositions, the Harvard researchers John C Beck and Mitchell Wade have identified ten characteristic attitudes of individuals who have grown up playing video games that are of particular interest: failure not being painful; risk being an inherent part of the game; an expectation of immediate feedback; becoming used to being the central figure; tendency to adopt trial and error as the best method; belief that there is always an answer; confidence that they can find the solution; enjoyment of competition; reduced sense of hierarchy and rules; and being used to group cooperation and conflict.<sup>1</sup> Whilst some of these may be less desirable dispositions than others, those relating to competition, collaboration, creativity, tenacity and resilience are certainly compelling things to be learning, and they seem to emerge naturally through playing digital games.

Content, meanwhile, can be defined as specific knowledge (either factual or conceptual), usually related to a particular domain. Even outside of the huge number of 'skill-and-drill' educational games expressly designed to teach particular content, for example spellings or times tables, many games enable (or even require) players to learn content through the context and domain of the game itself.

Classic PC titles such as *Civilisation* and *SimCity* may lead players to greater knowledge of the impact of physical geography on urban development. More recent titles such as those in the *Call of Duty* series, meanwhile, are distinctively situated in specific periods of warfare – including World War II and the Cold War – and whilst this type of 'first-person-shooter' game might be less than suitable for use with children (the games are typically rated at 18+), there is nevertheless an argument that players do develop some factual knowledge around the weaponry, armour and aircraft of the periods in question through gameplay.

One of the strengths of games is the way in which time can be sped up and systems simplified to highlight particular connections; playing strategy games in particular can help players to develop understanding of systems and interrelated variables. In the popular Facebook-based 'casual game' *Farmville*, players must plant and harvest crops and trees and raise animals in order to earn coins that can be used to buy more seeds for future seasons. As well as potentially gaining some knowledge of horticulture and agriculture processes,



players may develop understanding of supply and demand and business planning.

The content learnt can also go beyond the specific domain of the game being played; in popular sports titles such as *PGA Tour*, there are obvious opportunities to develop knowledge of sporting strategy, but players will also – albeit subconsciously – be considering aspects of physics and maths as they make decisions about the shots they take. The popular game *Minecraft*, meanwhile, allows children to create 3D structures with virtual blocks, building understanding of a range of mathematical concepts.

It is important to remember, though, that if games are such effective teachers, they are also able to teach children things that we do not wish them to learn. At the level of dispositions, the question of whether certain digital games promote aggressive behaviour and encourage misogynistic attitudes in the real world has been long debated, with the *Grand Theft Auto* series cited as a particular culprit.

Even at a content level, however, there are questions

around the validity (or inherent bias) of information presented in games and their presentation of the world. The main purpose of commercial games is entertainment not education, and as such they are not required to present an entirely accurate representation of the world. Whilst they must present at least a recognisably accurate view of the period or location in which they are set in order to appear convincing to the player, perfect historical, geographical or scientific accuracy is neither necessary nor, in many cases, desirable.

Fundamentally, player control is a key element of a game, so in historical strategy games the player must have the power to make decisions that will take the storyline away from strict historical accuracy; otherwise, the game becomes nothing more than a replay of the past.

Although there is, of course, a danger that players will believe the game's representation of the world to be entirely accurate, or consider that it is appropriate to replicate their behaviour in a game within a playground context, the danger seems no greater than that of basing attitudes or behaviour on fiction books or films with similar inaccuracies.

What is clear is that the role of schools and parents here is absolutely vital; the danger

can be largely negated through appropriate teaching of digital literacy and critical thinking in schools. Encouraging children to critically consider the validity of any information source can not only help to combat the potential problem of inaccuracies or undesirable representations in games, but can also be an important lesson for life beyond digital games.

*Cat Scutt is head of learning technology at The Girls' Day School Trust.*

In the next issue of *Conference & Common Room*, Cat Scutt will consider what teachers can learn from the digital games their pupils play.

1. Beck, J., and Wade, M. (2004). *Got Game: How the Gamer Generation is Reshaping Business Forever*. Harvard: Harvard Business Review Press

# Shall and will

C J Driver explains why he sits near the window



C J Driver

J C, who writes the NB column on the back page of the *TLS*, asked a few weeks ago: ‘When did you last cry on reading or hearing a poem?’ (*TLS*, 22 May) Our matric English class at St Andrew’s College in Grahamstown, South Africa, was taught by an elderly (or so she seemed) widow, Marjorie McKerron, a founder member of the Grahamstown and District Relief Association (GADRA) and (although she properly kept her politics to

herself) I suspect one of the very few people in the town who were members of the anti-apartheid Liberal Party.

Her nickname was ‘Bitch’, and she needed no help from housemasters in maintaining discipline in her classes. Her particular technique was to ‘take marks off’ the total for English which she would submit to the housemaster for the fortnightly mark orders, knowing perfectly well that low marks would result in especial sanctions.

There was a story in the school that, after a troublesome fortnight dealing with a thug from Upington, she had given him in the mark order not just 0, but -10. The housemaster refused to dock 10 marks off the rest of the boy’s already dodgy total; the issue ended in the headmaster’s study. I think Mrs McKerron probably lost that battle, though no doubt she won the war.

When she read us aloud the love-poems by Donne in our set anthology (am I right to remember it was called *The Great Tradition?*), tears would stream down her face: “Busy old fool...” she’d begin, and soon enough she’d weep. *The Will*, which took longer to read and was more intricately made, had the same effect. No one in the class giggled, not even the fat boy from Upington.

When in due time it fell to me to teach Donne myself, I would always go to the back of the class, near the window, because I knew I’d weep too, partly because of remembering her example, more because of the poem itself. A year ago, reading a selection of poems to an invited audience at a local fund-raising event (‘Violin & Verse’, we call the show), I decided to risk reading *The Will*; before I began, I warned the audience I’d probably cry when I got to the last stanza, and sure enough I did. Did I embarrass them? I hope not.

Of course, it’s not just the Donne love-poems which are a trigger for tears: almost any poem where fathers mourn their sons (Kipling, Ben Jonson...) requires me to move to the back of the room, near a window. Even to think of the brothers’ lament over Fidele in *Cymbeline* makes my eyes water.

John Adams, for many years head of the English department at Sevenoaks, and of all the teachers I have ever observed

probably the finest (though his colleague Alan Hurd ran him a close second – small wonder that Jonathan Bate dedicated one of his books to those two schoolmasters), told me once that teaching was the most ephemeral profession. I’m not sure how one measures the ephemeral but when, in my old age, I get unexpected letters about the teaching I used to do when I was younger, I do sometimes wonder whether the long years I spent running schools from the Headmaster’s study mattered as much as the fewer years spent actually teaching. Of course, teaching is ephemeral: if you do it well, your pupils move on from you to something more. Still, it’s good when the pupils remember something special.

Sometimes what they remember is odd. I went back to a memorial service at Sevenoaks recently. At the reception afterwards, a short thick-set man about my own age came up to me. “I remember you,” he said. “You helped coach U14 rugby in 1964. I even remember the first words you said to us, in your very strong South African accent. You pushed your head into the middle of the scrum and said, ‘Listen, you boys, you’re going to have to get your arses down.’”

I have just given up, after 51 years of involvement in schools in England, the last of my commitments, this time as a governor of a remarkable special school dealing primarily with dyslexic boys and girls. I’ve been a governor of the school for 15 years, starting just as I retired from Headmastering. Initially, when I joined the governors, I demurred at being subjected to a check by the Criminal Records Bureau (which didn’t after all cover my experience as a teacher in Asia or in South Africa – where I do have what I think of as an admirable police record); but eventually I swallowed my objections and submitted, as I reluctantly did on other occasions when CRBs were demanded. I cannot believe that box-ticking bureaucracy is safer than careful personal checking – and I am sure the wicked find it easier to circumvent systems than to sneak under the suspicious gaze of experienced and scrupulous employers.

Now, however, even a CRB check is deemed by OFSTED as insufficient; even though I’ve been doing the job for 15 years already, if I am to continue I have to have a DBS clearance (the D stands for disclosure; I’m not sure about the B, and S no doubt stands for ‘service’). This requires me to provide the names and addresses of two referees; photographic evidence via passport or driving licence that I am who I say I am; and a utility bill to show that I live where I say I live (just across the road from the school, as it happens). My short answer is No, I won’t. My longer answers involved some colonial expressions; ‘Ofsted’ has its linguistic possibilities. I cease to be a governor this month.

I wonder what Marjorie McKerron would have done. Take a few marks off the fortnightly total, perhaps. She used to mark our essays – written once a week, returned without fail a week later – out of 25. My ambition was to get full marks, because she was reputed never to give them. We were asked to compare and contrast two poems, one by Louis MacNeice, one by W H Auden. I wrote my essay, thought about it, re-wrote it, then handed it in. A week later it came back: 24/25. In her neat hand was written, ‘I would have given you full marks, but you really must learn to distinguish “shall” and “will”.’

*C J (Jonty) Driver is a poet, novelist, former President, National Union of South African Students, and former Master of Wellington College.*

# ‘He is an Englishman!’



Whilst English is at the moment the world’s most widely used language, there is no room for complacency amongst its native speakers. For one thing, English varies across the world, providing the building blocks for all sorts of mutations. As a result, those who speak what might be called the Queen’s English have long since been outnumbered by those who speak dialects, some of which seem a long way from the fountainhead.

So, instead of singing Gilbert’s tongue in cheek chorus ‘He is an Englishman’, set to appropriately bombastic music by Sullivan in the Savoy opera *HMS Pinafore*, English educators are fully engaged in a world-wide learning market.

English-medium international schools now provide education for over 4 million students around the world, a number that has risen dramatically from fewer than a million students at the millennium. Demand for places at international schools in many countries is growing apace and a number of UK independent schools have established a very strong and successful international presence.

The International School Consultancy (ISC), which provides data and intelligence on the English-medium international schools market, says the 4 million figure was reached for the first time ever in May 2015. The reason for the growth is two-fold. Expatriate families demand places for their children at international schools to ensure continuity of language, curriculum, examinations or orientation.

Secondly, an increasing number of wealthy local families seek out places for their children at international schools to give them an English-medium education with a learning approach and qualifications that provide the best opportunities for a place in a Western university.

Chinese parent Tao Sun says “If you want your child to have many options for world-class universities, and if you want them to survive, thrive and succeed there, then they need to start learning and speaking English as soon as they can. That’s why many families who can afford it look to schools that

provide such an opportunity for their children.”

Tao is also the chairman of H D Ningbo School in Zhejiang, China, which provides English-medium learning and where students study for IGCSEs and A levels. “Many children come to our school because our English component provides the best education in the world, with good discipline, educational heritage and qualities and qualifications that are respected by universities in Britain, the US and Canada.”

The country with the highest number of students attending international schools is the United Arab Emirates which has 479,700 students attending 514 English-medium international schools. However, China has now surpassed the UAE as the country with the largest number of schools. China has 530 English-medium international schools but currently only 326,400 students. The reason for this is that China’s earliest international schools are foreign-owned and, with few exceptions, such schools are not allowed to enrol Chinese nationals.

The increasing demand from Chinese parents for English-medium education for their children is changing the face of international schools in the country, with Chinese-owned bilingual international schools and English-medium Sino-Foreign Cooperative Schools now being established, both of which meet government criteria to accept Chinese nationals.

“The English-medium international schools market is exceedingly healthy, with strong growth in the numbers of schools and students certain for the foreseeable future in many regions,” says Nicholas Brummitt, chairman of ISC. “English-medium international schools are a vital education provision in most major cities today. The best international schools are among the most successful in the world, with exceptional examination results and a high proportion of students going on to the universities across the globe.”

[Just as the English language is the world's favourite means of conveying the message, so it was an Englishman, Sir Tim Berners-Lee who invented the world's favourite medium. As a result, English schools can add a virtual presence reaching far beyond their physical overseas outposts.](#)

Eton Online Ventures, a trading subsidiary of Eton College, has announced the formation of a joint venture with Eighteen70 to create a new company called EtonX, which will partner with leading schools in China to deliver courses built on Eton's style of education.

Simon Walsh, founder of the education technology provider Eighteen70, has been appointed as CEO of EtonX, with James Stanforth, head of digital education at Eton as the course director. Profits from this joint venture will enable Eton College to grow its bursary programme, which currently stands at £6million spent annually on scholarships and bursaries, with one fifth of the pupils receiving some support and 70 paying no fees at all.

In September 2015, EtonX will launch in China with the Modern Leadership Programme which will focus on key skills development in areas such as communication and collaboration. The programme aims to enhance the educational approach prevalent in many Chinese high schools to prepare Chinese students for higher education and the modern workplace. Schools are fully supported by teachers from Eton who will travel to China to train and collaborate with the participating local teachers.

Says Simon Walsh: “Eighteen70 was founded with the objective of humanising digital education through one-to-one live online tutoring. By using our established online tutoring platform, we enable students to access this innovative Eton course.”

James Stanforth adds: “Eton has a long history educating students to the highest standard. Through EtonX we will be able to share our best teaching practices and our tested course programme with Chinese teachers and give Chinese students the opportunity to practise their collaboration and communication skills. We're excited to take Eton into this new online project.”

[In the Prologue to \*King Henry V\*, Shakespeare's Chorus calls for 'a muse of fire that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention.' The internet brings to our minds an infinite range of exploration, stimulus and discovery. Where better](#)

[to demonstrate this than in the 'Wooden O' that once more stands on Southbank?](#)

New app *Shakespeare's Globe 360* brings the Globe into every classroom as the brilliant Southbank centre is releasing a free app that allows a 360-degree photo-real version of the famous theatre to be explored virtually in any classroom in the world.

Launched on 19th April, 2015, *Shakespeare's Globe 360* digitally recreates a fully interactive 3D Globe Theatre which can appear, perfectly scaled, on the desk in front of you or held in the palm of your hand. Dynamic content provides information about the past and present of this unique building. It is one of the first uses of the latest augmented reality technology within education and the first app of its kind created by a theatre.

Natalie Jim, drama curriculum leader at Sarah Bonnell School in Tower Hamlets, London, tried the app with her students. “We are lucky to be able to take our students to the Globe through the Globe Education projects, but obviously we can't take everybody. This app actually brings the Globe into the school in a very real way. *Shakespeare's Globe 360* definitely has the 'wow' factor – the students are absolutely engaged and inspired by it. We're very much about student-led learning and what's lovely about *Shakespeare's Globe 360* is that they can take control of their learning. There's no right or wrong, and they can explore it as they want to, at their own pace.”

Users move around a 3D virtual Globe, a faithful replica of the original Globe built in 1599. The augmented reality mode allows the model to appear over a 'marker' – the Globe logo on a book or another device's screen – as if appearing in front of them. One icon takes the user through the virtual oak doors and inside, where they can view and explore the theatre from six different locations, including an actor's-eye view from the famous stage itself; backstage in the tiring-house; and standing in the Yard, where they can re-enact the Elizabethan audience's experience, tilting their device to look up at the sky and the circle of thatched roofing.

Information hotspots reveal videos from Globe scholars giving historical context, facts about the building past and present, and images from previous stage productions.

English teacher Nick Bentley commented: “When we're exploring Shakespeare plays, we look at the text, but it's so important to think about the audience and the broader theatrical context too. That's the beauty of the app: it really allows the students to understand what it's like from different points of view, the audience and the actor. The students have loved clicking on the different sections to learn more about the history of the Globe, and how that interplays with the rest of their studies.”

Patrick Spottiswoode, Director, Globe Education, is excited that the Globe Theatre will be available to everyone. “Sam Wanamaker, the Globe's founder, asked over and over again what we might do for the 'child in Stornoway' who was not necessarily going to be able to come to Shakespeare's Globe in London. He would have loved the digital world and would love this app which allows students in Stornoway or Shenyang in China the opportunity to explore the Globe Theatre for themselves in their homes or classrooms.”

Sam Wanamaker was, of course, an American!

# Working with and for the community

## New growth makes SPACe in Arboretum Street

Work has recently started on a brand new arts venue for the city of Nottingham at GDST's Nottingham Girls' High School. The Squire Performing Arts Centre, or SPACe, has been eight years in design and development and the £9 million facility will be a valuable new resource for the school and the wider Nottingham community. Joining Rosemary Squire for the ground breaking event was fellow alumna Dame Stella Rimington, as well as construction partners Balfour Beatty.

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK, has invested £7.5 million in the development. Nottingham Girls' High School raised the further £1.5 million in a campaign led by a dedicated development board, alumnae, governors and parents. "Community outreach is a cornerstone of activity in schools throughout the GDST," says Helen Fraser, the Trust's CEO. "The SPACe has been a triumph for Nottingham Girls' High School and the team has pioneered this project from the very beginning with unwavering passion and clarity of vision."

The school is already fully engaged with the Nottingham community, as the Head, Sue Gorham explains: "We truly value our relationships with schools in the Nottingham community and are proud of the strong ties we have built that enable us to bring students together to learn new skills, make new friends and have fun."

Nottingham Girls' High School has launched FUSE, a collaborative Community Arts Festival with local artists for young people across the city. FUSE is part of an extensive outreach initiative where engagement with over 40 local primary schools continues in project-led activity days covering a wide range of subjects from the performing arts to sciences and maths. The aim is to challenge young people through creative approaches to learning, and strengthen local community ties by sharing knowledge, resources and support.

FUSE provides young people with the opportunity to experience and be inspired by a range of arts within their local community, by offering a space and the expertise to



*The SPACe: watch this.*



*Close up to nature.*

learn and develop creative skills. Students from across the city collaborate and devise new work with the guidance and expertise of Nonsuch Theatre, local musician Josh Kemp, choreographer Jamie Thomson, photographer Samuel Kirby and video production company Allergic Films. FUSE is a feat of collaboration, bringing together five art disciplines in theatre, music, dance, film and photography, with over 40 young people aged between 11-16 from seven schools taking part in the four week festival, culminating in an arts showcase at Nottingham Girls' High School.

The SPACe is named after Nottingham Girls' High School alumna Rosemary Squire OBE, co-founder and joint CEO of the Ambassador Theatre Group Ltd. Fellow alumnae Jenny Farr MBE, for over 50 years a leading figure in the NSPCC, and Dame Stella Rimington, former Director of MI5, are also involved in the project, whilst Nottingham philanthropist, Sir Harry Djanogly, has lent his full support to the development. The SPACe's main auditorium will be named in honour of his wife, Lady Carol Djanogly. Generous support from The Garfield Weston Foundation will be recognised with the naming of The SPACe's 75-seat studio theatre.

Outside school hours, the state of the art performing arts centre will be available for use by local community groups, arts organisations and other schools. It has been designed to widen access to the arts and for developing community-led projects. Nottingham's schools and vibrant local dance, music and theatre groups will have access to high-quality, affordable space for teaching, rehearsal and performance – a provision that is currently limited.

Says Sue Gorham: "Rosemary Squire is a real inspiration and a true ambassador for the arts – just what we dreamed of for The SPACe. We want to raise the ambitions and aspirations of our future performing artists and provide them with the facilities to develop their talent fully. Our entire school community has put their heart and soul in to this project. Work starting on its development is a huge milestone for us and for the city, and marks the culmination of almost eight years of hard work, planning and fundraising. Our ultimate goal is that The SPACe will make a real difference to the people of Nottingham."

Speaking on site, Rosemary Squire said: "To have this wonderful modern performing arts facility named after my family is a special honour and privilege. My heart is still very much in Nottingham. It is my childhood home and where my passion for live theatre began. In a city that has faced many challenges, the arts are a great unifying force for good with a vibrant local dance, music and theatre scene and high levels of participation and engagement. The key challenge for arts groups has been to find high-quality and affordable space for teaching, rehearsal and performance to raise aspirations and deliver enjoyable audience experiences.

We hope that The SPACe will fulfil this need and provide years of fantastic opportunities for young people within the community."

The SPACe will feature a flexible 345 seat performance space, orchestra pit and large floor lift to provide multi-purpose use; music rehearsal and theory rooms; dressing rooms; ballet *barres*; professional lighting; control rooms with professional mixing desks and multi-use acoustic design for spoken word and musical performances. As well as performance facilities, The SPACe will be used to give Nottingham Girls' High School students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, learning the skills of professional theatre technicians such as lighting, sound recording, box office and back stage.

Dame Stella Rimington is clear about the benefits The SPACe will confer: "The school gave me a sound education, but it also taught me the skills needed to perform successfully in public, from which came the self-confidence which has carried me on through my career. The SPACe will provide the opportunity for a new generation of girls to learn the same skills in a modern environment."

From the construction side of the project Mike Reade, Midlands delivery unit managing director, Balfour Beatty, added another element of community involvement. "On this state of the art development, BIM technology was used to ensure we deliver a sustainable building to a tight programme in a live working environment. As part of our commitment to become the first UK company to spend a billion pounds with small and medium businesses in a single year we look forward to recruiting as many local supply chain partners as possible for this project."



# Adversity proved the mother of progress

Foremarke Hall, Repton's preparatory school, is celebrating its 75th anniversary, having started life within Repton during World War II. Sue Grief looks at how Repton School converted the challenges of war into an opportunity

The village of Repton has been a centre of godliness and good learning from the seventh century. It has also witnessed violence, war and destruction since the Vikings destroyed the Benedictine Abbey so closely linked with the Mercian royal family in 874. The great burial ground the Danish invaders left behind is one of the most important archaeological sites in England and remains of Repton Priory, founded in the 12th century and destroyed after the dissolution of the monasteries, can still be seen amongst the buildings of Repton School.

Sir John Port saw in these desecrated buildings the perfect location for a new school, a leap of faith to be echoed in 1947 when the governors purchased the derelict Foremarke Hall for their rapidly expanding prep school. Their decision to open their own preparatory school in 1940 cannot at first have seemed a propitious time for such an undertaking, but the school flourished and September 2015 sees it celebrating its 75th anniversary in its magnificent second home.

To mark this milestone, a weekend has been organised which includes former Heads and pupils gathering to hear speeches, touring the wonderful facilities, taking time to reminisce and eat lunch, listening to a specially commissioned new school anthem and finally taking to the floor at a glittering diamond ball.

Today the school, now named after the building it occupies, sits in an inspiring and spacious setting. A co-educational day

and boarding preparatory school of over 400 pupils, aged from three to 13, it is set in the 50-acre grounds of a beautifully proportioned 18th century Palladian hall in south Derbyshire.

In the grounds, among other facilities, are to be found the new £6m Quad which houses a contemporary music school, the languages department, the school's English and humanities departments, an art block complete with kiln, a designated ICT suite for design and technology and a Greenpower garage for Foremarke's award-winning electric cars. There's a swimming pool, an AstroTurf hockey pitch and a lake used for fishing and sailing. A stand-alone pre-prep department and a theatre – where actor Tom Chambers says he decided a career in acting was what he wanted – are also part of the scene.

It is all quite different from where and how it began.

Times of austerity are ones in which the establishment of new independent schools is, at the very best, unusual. For the most part economic downturn brings ends rather than beginnings in the sector. Perhaps, too, the most intense period of austerity imaginable is wartime, and embarking on opening a new independent school in such circumstances seems a remarkable undertaking to contemplate, let alone achieve.

This, however, is exactly what Repton School decided to do in 1940, with a boldness and imagination that has proved to be invaluable, both to Repton itself and to the hundreds of pupils subsequently educated in the prep school. Ironically, it was the hard times being experienced by schools with the threat of another great war on the horizon that meant accommodation for such a school became available within Repton. The outbreak of war saw all manner of changes in the school and in the activities in which the boys were engaged. Harvest camps were organised, a Labour Corps began, younger members of staff went off to do war service and regular electricity blackouts caused considerable disruption in classrooms and boarding houses.

Of most concern, however, was the decline in pupil numbers, which dropped from 365 in September 1939 to 296 a year later. This number was to plummet further. In 1938, the Headmaster, Harold George Michael Clarke, had to make the difficult decision of closing a boarding house. The Cross, which stands in the very centre of Repton village, was selected.

A decision was taken by the governors and Mr Clarke to use some of Repton's redundant accommodation for the establishment of a prep school, in the hope that this would ultimately boost numbers within the senior school. On April 29th, 1940, Repton Preparatory School opened its doors with just eight boys making up the pupil roll. Situated in The Cross, the school was staffed by the Headmaster B W Thomas and his wife and Miss Susan Todd. By July 1st the eight boys had increased to 18; by September there were 30 and this jumped to 50 by the end of the year.

The Cross provided both dormitories (known in Repton as 'bedders') and classrooms for the first two years until another boarding house, Latham, closed in 1942, at which point this provided the domestic accommodation for the prep school pupils. Latham, named after its founding housemaster, was itself established in wartime, yet another example of Repton's willingness to challenge adversity.

In 1918 the school could easily have become despairingly introspective, having lost 355 former pupils out of the 1912 Reptonians who fought in the war, with a further 470 wounded. But, taking their cue from 'Jackie' Smyth, who won the Victoria Cross in 1915, the school faced adversity down.

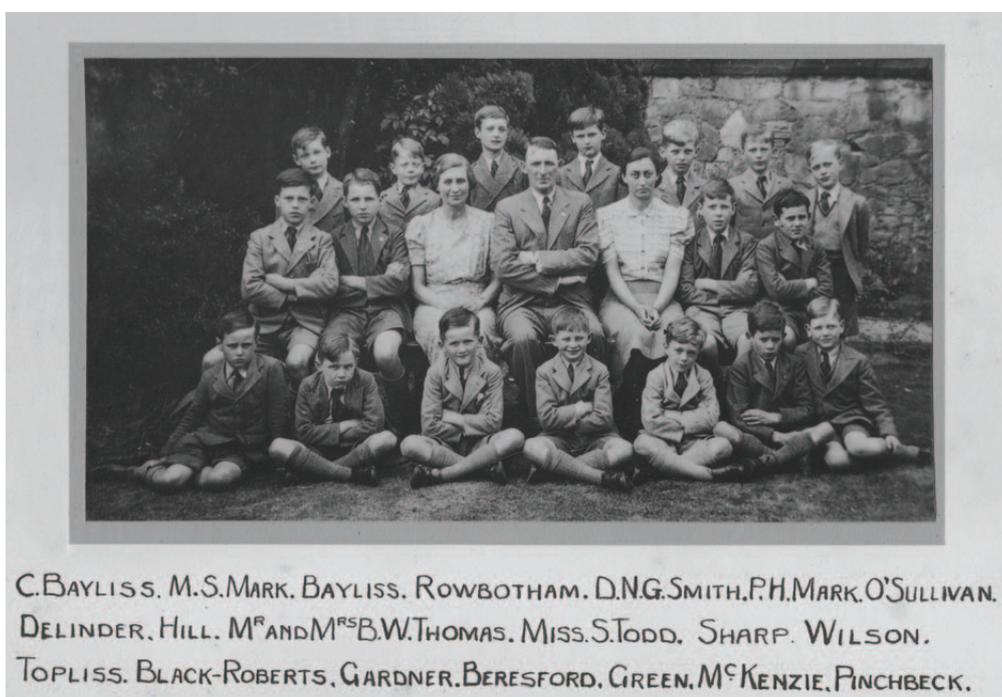
As had been hoped, the preparatory school was soon proving successful, both in that it started to make a reasonable profit, contributing to Repton's overall financial stability, and also because many of the prep school boys went on to study in the senior school. It remained within the village until 1947, by which time demand for places in the senior school had recovered so significantly that Latham was once again needed as a senior school boarding house and the prep had to find a new site.

Foremarke Hall, recently released by the Army after use as an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), was chosen by the governors to be the school's new home. A display of palatial grandeur, the derelict house,

surrounded by acres of Derbyshire countryside, would undergo massive transformation and has been the home for thousands of boys and girls since the relocation. Having served as a military hospital in The Great War and then as an OCTU, the Officers' Mess was well suited to be the school's dining hall and the inevitable Nissen huts provided classrooms, as they did in a number of other schools. It is reported that pupils and staff alike donned overalls and paintbrushes in order to prepare the new site for its opening, although some of the old army slogans remained visible, making for some startling classroom décor.

Needless to say, the school has received much 'tender loving care' since those early days to become the highly successful, warm, traditional-yet-modern Foremarke so many know and love. As for Repton, it too has gone on to develop, grow and invest in facilities that further strengthen and enhance the outstanding education it provides.

Repton School stands on the site of a 12th century Augustinian Priory, which was not only a place of education,



*First School photograph. Below: Foremarke Hall today.*



## Schools

but also home to a courageous and pioneering group of people who understood the need to put their theories to the test, often in hostile conditions, whilst drawing strength from the companionship of those around them. Over the centuries, and following the foundation of the School in 1557, this tradition has been nurtured and developed so that the twin goals of education and community have become central to all that the Repton of today seeks to achieve.

The prep school can be seen as an example of this. Being born in a time of hardship but offering hope to those within and around it means it was a happy place, and this atmosphere has stayed with the school right down to present times. As Mahatma Gandhi said: “Adversity is the mother of progress.”

*Sue Grief is press officer to the Repton Schools and wishes to thank the Repton School librarian, Paul J Stevens, for his help with this article.*



*The Priory, Repton.*

# ‘Comparison is the thief of joy’

Helen Jeys looks at some of the ways in which schools can promote good pastoral care

I was interested to read Charlotte Vere’s remarks in *The Daily Telegraph* earlier this year. In her article, she comments that ‘for too long, independent schools have been defined by outdated stereotypes and ill-informed preconceptions’. Vere

focuses on those stereotypes that affect all of us who work in the independent system, one of which is that our schools are full of rich toffs and, as a result, are not an accurate representation of the *real* world.

We can all appreciate that this is far from the truth. However, there are other stereotypes that cause me equal amounts of frustration; preconceptions that I face on a regular basis when talking to those who work both within and outside the education system.

Why do we need pastoral systems in schools like ours?

Surely the students at our schools do not face the problems students in comprehensive schools face?

The view that our students do not face the same issues as those in the state system was reinforced by reports that

...a lot of Head Teachers are very uncomfortable talking about the mental health issues their pupils are struggling with. These schools are businesses. If they hide the issue then it won’t tarnish the brand.

This view, quoted by Young Minds back in 2014, is a dangerous one and one which I hope will become a stereotype rejected by all good schools. After all, the evidence before us is clear. 9.8% of children suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder. Whichever sector we work in, we deny the scale of the problem at our own peril.

However, with well-reported problems facing public services



*Helen Jeys*



*Manchester High School for Girls.*

in this area, what can we do in schools? Ignoring mental health problems is not an option, responding and reacting to them within our school environments is a necessity. However, we can do better than this. I believe, passionately, that a proactive, outstanding pastoral system is a necessity in every school – be it state *or* independent.

### **Causes of the problem**

The causes of mental health issues in our schools are pretty clear if you have a pastoral role within school. Students today have a very different life-experience from the one we might have enjoyed several decades ago. The pressure to look good, to fit in, to do well in a constant flurry of tests and examinations and have the ability to cope with the associated pressures of social media, produce for many a toxic mix which leads to a spiraling decline in self-esteem – for both girls and boys.

Furthermore, the basis of many students’ feelings of self-worth on the amount of ‘likes’ received on Instagram and Facebook posts results in a generation of students who lack the resilience to tackle problems they may face. I vividly remember a comment made to me by a Year 8 girl who said, quite simply, “You will never understand just how important it is for pictures we post to be liked.”

This is an attitude that I have come to accept rather than understand, but it does reflect the increasing levels of pressure felt by the young people who attend our schools. It is also a reminder of the important roles all of us play in supporting young people. As Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Chair of the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Coalition, said:

School is a critical environment ... [There is a need] to provide young people with the help, support and self-empowerment to develop and maintain resilience to stay mentally healthy,

### **So what do we do? Listen! Be proactive!**

I think that there are some key watchwords of outstanding pastoral care. The two that I try to live by are to *listen* and be

*proactive*. We cannot be expected to get pastoral care right all the time and we are not a replacement for professional health services when the needs arise. However, we must be willing to listen to the views of our students, our parents and each other in an effort to improve the care and support we provide.

Indeed, one student came to see me several years ago commenting on how good it would be to see or read something that would inspire and motivate students as they walked around the school. This conversation gave rise to a ‘Thought for the Week’ which now adorns every corridor wall in my school and which we link with assemblies, theme weeks and form time activities.

These motivational quotes are provided by staff and students alike and have been a simple yet powerful way to communicate important pastoral messages. One ‘thought’, passed to me by a Latin teacher, was Theodore Roosevelt’s ‘comparison is the thief of joy’. Just a momentary glance provides the form tutor, the assembly leader and the head of year with so many opportunities to talk to students about the importance of self-worth and individuality.

Associated theme weeks have enabled us to spend longer amounts of time focusing on encouraging students to think creatively about ways to respond to disappointment, the importance of celebrating our achievements, no matter what the context, and understanding the pointlessness of pursuing perfection.

It is really gratifying, also, to see how many schools have now embraced wellbeing programmes and mindfulness practices. Providing opportunities for reflection and focusing on character development are fundamental in enabling our students to leave school with the grit and resilience needed to face the challenges of the workplace. And this, really, brings me back to my starting point. Do we need a pastoral system in our schools? I believe that if we embed outstanding pastoral care, it actually becomes the very ethos by which our schools breathe. As the Department of Health’s *Future in Mind* publication comments, ‘there is no time to waste’.

*Helen Jeys is the deputy head mistress (pastoral) at Manchester High School for Girls.*

# Street food and international cuisine

## Ronan Harte takes the lid off the latest trend in school catering

“Please, sir, I want some more” is one of the most famous quotations in literature. It did not, of course, mean that Oliver Twist and his fellow workhouse children found the food so good that seconds would merely add to their delight, but that the allowed provision was exiguous.

So Jane Eyre found it at Lowood School where ‘the scanty supply of food was distressing: with the keen appetites of growing children, we had scarcely sufficient to keep alive a delicate invalid’.

In the 1950s and ’60s, rowing schools would provide the members of their First Eight with extra rations and it could be argued that food fights only occurred because of the plentiful supply of weaponry to be found on the supposedly nutritious plate.

Nowadays, Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte would not recognise what is provided by school kitchens. School food is news thanks to Jamie Oliver, amongst others, and to the new breed of school caterers. The sheer breadth of provision is remarkable and food is a vital component in making schools happy and productive places.

Eating healthily and sociably is important throughout life, but perhaps especially so in the school years. Teaching children about ingredients, cooking and healthy diets is as important as any other feature of their education and the members of school catering departments are crucial members of the school community.

Over the last ten years, children have become increasingly discerning about the food they eat, and the whole experience of dining. Inspired by cookery programmes, celebrity chefs and high street trends, school food is having to become more and more on trend to really pack a punch with pupils. Theatre kitchens, juice bars, coffee shops and restaurant style menus are now the norm for many independent schools, but the latest craze is undoubtedly street food.

In addition to the core hot and cold food options served on a day-to-day basis, schools now want something more from their school food provision to keep them one step ahead of their competitors. They want more choice, healthier, fresher ingredients and an experiential approach to dining. Street food is a great vehicle for satisfying these demands as it allows school caterers to create exciting, globally-inspired menus and serve them in an informal fashion that encourages social interaction amongst peers. Street food particularly appeals to children as it is colourful, fun and tasty.

Independent school caterer Holroyd Howe has recently introduced pop-up street food stations in schools to meet this demand. Serving food from Vietnam, South America and around the world, these

stations offer pupils a chance to taste a wide variety of authentic international cuisines and expand their food knowledge.

Street food brings with it the tastes and textures of other countries, and tends to use a lot of really fresh, vibrant ingredients. This sets the scene for an engaging environment, immersing pupils in a wide variety of culinary cultures.

Theatre is integral to the concept and no less so in schools, where Holroyd Howe wants to make food as exciting as possible for pupils. Using street-style food stands to bring an element of the cooking and presentation into the dining room, and preparing food in front of the pupils, removes the barrier between them and the cooking process. Pupils engage with the ingredients and can watch how they are blended and transformed into meals in front of their eyes – and noses! And it gives them the chance to speak to the talented and knowledgeable chefs about what they are about to eat.

With a consistent rise in the number of international pupils attending independent schools in the UK, providing a broad range of cuisines is also increasingly essential. Holroyd Howe insists on only using authentic recipes, giving pupils a real taste, and understanding, of many different international cuisines and culinary styles.

Street food presents the perfect opportunity for food education. After all, school caterers are not only responsible for providing fresh, high quality school food but also for teaching pupils a thing or two about where food comes from and how to cook it. Providing a street food option is a way for caterers to teach pupils about food provenance.

An understanding of how complex ingredients are balanced together to create dishes like Vietnamese Pho or South American Empanadas will hopefully encourage pupils to become scratch cooks and to take an interest in other cultures. Pupils are not just eating the food provided, they are watching it being cooked, seeing the fresh ingredients go into it and sometimes even cooking it themselves. This type of experiential learning contributes to their overall development, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to be able to source healthy, fresh ingredients and, in short, become cooks.

Standards in school food are rising across the board and whilst the focus was once primarily on sporting facilities and learning resources, schools are now investing heavily in newly designed dining halls and serveries, restaurant quality cooking facilities and a far better quality of school caterers.

The crossover into casual dining is just one more way for school caterers to entice young diners. Offering grab and go options appeals to the fast-paced lifestyles of Generation Z, and if those options also mirror the foods they are seeking out on the high street, all the better for the school.

“Feeding pupils delicious, exciting food is obviously of utmost importance to us, but also being able to show them how to make it themselves is extremely rewarding. This interactive demonstration style seems to be increasingly popular with TV chefs and their audiences, and we’ve found pupils of all ages love to interact with food in this way. It’s also a great way for us to expand their knowledge of food and cookery,” says company executive chef Damian Blake, who launched the street food concept at Holroyd Howe’s schools.

*Holroyd Howe ([www.holroydhowe.com](http://www.holroydhowe.com)) is an independent school catering company founded by Rick Holroyd and Nick Howe in 1997.*



# When teamwork becomes partnership

Malcolm Tozer shows how schools can help to build a healthier and happier nation

In March 2015, several national newspapers published a summary of the findings of a survey on school sport that had recently been conducted by the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC). It was quite an eye-opener for teachers of physical education (PE) and sports coaches in state schools, particularly when they read how much time HMC schools allocated to PE and sport.

There is no statutory requirement for state schools to devote a certain amount of time to PE and sport, but inspections suggest that most schools allocate two hours each week for pupils aged five to 14, with some schools giving more and some less. The position for older pupils is even more variable, with some getting no PE or sport within timetabled lessons, particularly if they are in public examination years.

By contrast, the survey showed that when the totals for PE periods, games lessons and team practices were combined, HMC schools allocated on average between five and six hours a week, and that the provision was consistent for both boys and girls, across all age groups from 11 to 18, at day and boarding, single-sex and co-educational schools.

*Tonbridge School.*



Although those who responded to the HMC's questionnaire disagreed with the statement that 'there is pressure on PE and games curriculum time to make way for more academic curriculum time', the average of five to six hours found in 2015 was less than that recorded in earlier publications. John Kane's survey in 1974 for *Physical Education in Secondary Schools* reported seven and a half hours for boys' boarding schools – four times the state school average.

This figure remained steady 11 years later for both boys' schools and co-educational schools, when Nick Aplin published his survey for the Independent Schools Physical Education Conference. In the same year, girls' schools recorded six hours a week. Over the long term then, the time allocated to PE and sport in independent schools has slipped, for whatever reasons, but it is still about three times that found in most state schools.

The reason for the buzz of conversation amongst PE teachers in state schools thus became clear. It was not as if independent schools had sacrificed academic attainment on the altar of sporting glory, or downplayed the important contributions that art, community service, drama, music, outdoor pursuits and much more make to contemporary holistic education. Independent schools somehow seem to 'have it all'.

Carol Hawman, editor of *Physical Education Matters*, the journal of the Association for Physical Education (afPE), rightly deduced that much, if not everything, relating to the place that PE and sport occupied in each school's curriculum depended on the attitude of the Headteacher. She therefore invited three independent school Heads to write a piece for her journal on why they valued PE and sport in their schools and on how they turned policy into practice: Richard Merriman (RM) at Foremarke Hall in Derbyshire, a co-educational boarding and day preparatory school; Jane Gandee (JG) at St Swithun's in Winchester, a boarding and day senior school for girls; and John Cloughton (JC) at King Edward's in Birmingham, a day senior school for boys.

The three schools presented a cross-section of the independent school community. In addition, John was chairman of the HMC sports committee that commissioned the original survey. The three responses were published alongside a summary of the HMC's findings in this summer's edition of *Physical Education Matters*.

The 1000 word essays were written independently by the three Heads, but the substance of their content was remarkably similar and might make it easier for bold state school PE teachers to suggest to their Headteachers how PE and sport could be better served in their schools.

So why did the three Heads value PE and sport? Most importantly, each led a school where PE and sport had long played important roles in the educational culture. Everything else seemed to stem from that base. All three were certain

that regular, and preferably daily, PE and sport promoted good health, physical fitness, mental wellbeing and emotional stability.

I strongly believe that every girl ... should have developed some sort of exercise habit by the time she leaves school. (JG)

Each was sure that the challenge, commitment and competition associated with sport helped to build personal qualities such as self-confidence, self-esteem, determination, perseverance and resilience.

Children are competitive ... and want to play in teams. (JC)

In addition, they were confident that playing in teams contributed to a sense of community and making friends; promoted both leadership and co-operation; and endorsed the courtesy of winning and losing gracefully.

We wish the pupils to wear their school badge with pride. (RM)

By offering a range of activities, they encouraged every pupil to achieve success; they allowed pupils to develop at different rates; they taught that dedicated practice brought steady improvement; and they promoted fulfilment and enjoyment in at least one sport for every pupil.

Everyone can put in effort and improve. (JG)

Finally, all three were convinced that active involvement in sport was both energising and relaxing; that it encouraged efficient time management; that it boosted academic performance and examination results; and that it established a work and play balance that would serve a lifetime.

Sport must be one of the great forces for good in terms of integrating into any community. (JC)

And how did the three Heads achieve their aims for PE and sport? Each appointed a team of committed and enthusiastic experts; each expected every member of their teaching staff to contribute to extra-curricular activities; and each allocated ample curricular time plus more voluntary opportunities for sport after lessons.

A (Y7) boy ... comes close to spending one day out of five in sporting activity. (JC)

Teaching core skills and ensuring sound physical development were priorities; then came the provision of a broad range of activities, the introduction of competition, and the insistence that every pupil should have the chance to play in house or school teams.

All players are valued and gain a sense of self-worth. (RM)

Stretching the most talented performers was important but secondary to a philosophy of sport for all. PE and sport had

to be tailor-made to match each school's needs. For example: youngsters should not play full-size team games; girls and boys may have different likes and dislikes; and not all ethnic groups share the same sporting traditions.

We seek to remove possible barriers to playing sport. (JG)

Opportunities to celebrate pupils' successes, to involve parents in their children's progress, and to forge links with the local community and local sports clubs should always be seized. Facilities, of course, were important, but if the culture was right and if the will was there, then somehow the money would be found.

We are preparing the pupils for a lifetime's engagement with sport. (RM)

And there was one other important factor. All three Heads had enjoyed sport at school, had played sport at university and thereafter – and at a high level – and they continue to take regular exercise. They lead by example.

PE and sport have an important part to play in the culture of Foremarke Hall, St Swithun's and King Edward's – and at most independent schools. This used to be the case for state



*Climbing the wall at Tonbridge.*

## Teamwork

schools, at least until the late 1980s, when sporting links between state and independent schools were strong. Indeed, many of the PE teachers who were appointed to independent schools in the 1960s and 1970s had been pupils at state schools.

It was in 1988 that Peter McIntosh, the former chief inspector for PE in London, noted that PE and sport were beginning to lose their special place in schools. The imposition of the National Curriculum, disputes over teachers' contracts, and reluctance by some teachers to help with extra-curricular activities were the main reasons cited.

The pendulum has begun to swing back in the last ten years or so as more and more state schools have placed greater emphasis on PE and sport – but the progress has been uneven, both geographically and over time. Amongst the contributory factors in this change have been the partnerships in PE and sport forged between state and independent schools during this period.

As yet there is no overall picture of these partnerships, although the Department for Education and the Independent Schools Council plan to launch a new website giving details of all partnership activities, but local surveys record their role in enabling increasing numbers of schools to rediscover the culture that PE and sport are important. For example, more than 80% of preparatory schools in the south-west of England

and in south Wales have established links with state schools, joining in sports and activities together, sharing facilities, teachers and in-service training. A similar picture was found for girls' schools in the Midlands.

The afPE is an enthusiastic supporter of these partnerships and it has published reports of their work in *Physical Education Matters* as part of the association's contribution to Lord Coe's Olympic legacy, following the London Games of 2012.

**Leicester Grammar School** was quick off the mark, establishing links with state schools in 1997 and joining the local Schools Sports Partnership in 2001. The school regularly plays host to senior school county championship and junior school tournaments in cricket, hockey, netball, rugby and table tennis. It has also staged the Leicestershire and Rutland School Games, with over 1000 pupils competing in a range of sports.

The school has fixtures with many local schools, matching the composition of its teams to the standard of the opposition and so providing sporting opportunities for more of its own pupils. Links with local clubs are strong and include Leicester Tigers for rugby and swimming for Leicester Penguins.

**Tonbridge School** also has a long tradition of partnership links. Every year nearly 1000 children from state schools attend Community Day: some try sports they have never



*On track at Tonbridge.*



*Archery at Tonbridge.*

experienced, others compete in their favourite activities. The school's excellent athletics facilities are used for primary school championships and for coaching sessions – the latter often including Olympic athletes who are based in the town.

Boys from the school also serve as coaches for local children as part of their community service programme. Academies based at the school for cricket and hockey provide pathways to improvement for talented performers of all backgrounds and promote entry to local clubs. The school's athletics and swimming facilities, its all-weather pitches and the sports hall, are used by many primary schools and sports associations for children.

A whistle-stop tour of other partnerships would cover

**Uppingham School** playing host to Active Rutland's state school championships in many sports and the provision of a broad range of holiday clubs.

**Epsom College's** long-term partnership with Lambeth Academy in Clapham and playing host to county championships in netball, squash, swimming and tennis.

**Lady Eleanor Holles School** in Hampton sharing its facilities with a dozen local schools as well as staging county championships in lacrosse, netball, rounders and trampolining.

**Millfield School's** outstanding facilities welcoming numerous county and regional championships in a broad range of sports, and its pupils coaching primary school children on site every Saturday.

On 1st July, **Bolton School** hosted the launch of The Bolton Sports Alliance, a new partnership model consisting of Bolton Wanderers Community Trust, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, Bolton School and The Lancashire Outdoor Activities Initiative that aims to provide high quality sport and physical education opportunities for the community of Bolton.

The afPE would like to publish more stories of successful partnerships. If your school is contributing to the regeneration of PE and sport in state schools, playing its part to build a healthier and happier nation, and contributing to the legacy of the London Olympic Games, do please tell me more via tozer.peandsport@gmail.com

*Malcolm Tozer taught physical education at Uppingham School and was Headmaster of Northamptonshire Grammar School and Wellow House School. He edited Physical Education and Sport in Independent Schools, published by John Catt Educational Ltd in 2012.*

*Photographs courtesy of Tonbridge School.*

*Yarm School Boathouse.*



# Vision and partnership transform north east school

[Yarm School completes its six-year development plan thanks to the strong support of Santander](#)

Yarm School, a leading independent school in the Tees Valley, has developed a series of state of the art, award-winning buildings and school facilities following a multi-million pound funding deal from Santander Corporate & Commercial. The project, which began in 2009, will conclude this August with the completion of an iconic new Boathouse and Music School – both of which have been directly supported by the funding from Santander.

Yarm School was founded in 1978 when a group of parents formed the Cleveland Independent School Trust and acquired the buildings and grounds of the old Yarm Grammar School site. Since then it has become a major educational success story in the north east and is now established among the country's leading independent schools. It achieved national prominence in 2012 when ex-pupil Kat Copeland won

Olympic Gold partnering Sophie Hosking in the Women's lightweight double sculls.

For the past six years the school has undergone a £25 million redevelopment programme aimed at building world-class educational, sporting and arts facilities for its growing number of students. The school's new performing arts centre includes the Princess Alexandra Auditorium, a stunning 800-seat auditorium opened in 2013 by HRH Princess Alexandra, which includes a theatre, dance studio and music performance suite.

Yarm School has received national acclaim for the new development from the Royal Institute of British Architects while David Dunn, the school's Headmaster, addressed the Independent Schools Council at the House of Lords in relation to this long and successful project. Funding from Santander

Corporate & Commercial has been used to support a range of the school's developments and new facilities, including the auditorium and the new boathouse and music school.

Ian Massey, relationship director, Santander Corporate & Commercial, adds: "Yarm School is a major educational success story in the north east – indeed, for the UK. The development work the school has undertaken over the past six years has turned it into a world-class establishment. It is the highest profile independent school on Teeside and we strongly believe it will continue to expand and grow going forward.

"The school has developed an excellent reputation and a strong track record and Santander has been absolutely delighted to be involved in such a wonderful project. From the minute we became involved in the initiative we could see that this was a special project of real significance to all its stakeholders – the passion and the drive from the team at the school in particular were highly compelling.

"Education is a major sector focus for Santander Corporate & Commercial and over the past five years we have developed a strong portfolio of educational clients in the north east and across the UK. Yarm School is evidence of the high calibre of this portfolio and our aspirations in the UK education sector. We continue to look for deals across all educational establishments, particularly ones of the calibre of Yarm School. It is a wonderful initiative for the bank to be connected with."

David Dunn, who has been leading the school since 1999, said: "The support from Santander Corporate & Commercial has been instrumental throughout this project. The school has undergone a profound transformation to become one of the UK's leading educational institutions, and we are all humbled by what has been achieved over the past six years. We will now build on these world-class achievements further and focus on delivering a world-class education for our pupils."

## 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.

### Godalming girls' goals

After spending 19 years at King Edward's Witley, Andrew Wyciechowski knows all about coaching 11-18 year old boys and girls, but his greatest legacy will be the pivotal role he has played in pioneering girls' football. Prior to joining the school, Andrew ran a successful football coaching business and recognised the massive potential for a UK roll-out of a sport primarily reserved for boys.

The girls' football team started out with just eight pupils but very quickly attracted the attention of other girls in the school. In their first season the girls' team won the Independent Schools Football Association (ISFA) Under 15 league and since then there have been numerous accolades culminating in winning the first ever ISFA Under 18 South Eastern League in 2014. One former pupil has gone on to play for Cambridge University and another has been selected for the ISFA National Team.

When asked what the appeal of the sport is to girls, Andrew puts forward a number of theories. "It is relatively simple to play and the rules are similar to those of hockey. Any sport which emanates from our American cousins tends to have an immediate impact and of course, the mere fact that we have national TV coverage of women's football and that a dedicated premier league now exists is indicative of the growing popularity of the game."



# The King Alfred School Village Project 2015

Stephen De Brett describes an unusual week in the life of Year 8

The King Alfred School Village Project is an innovative, cross-curricular education programme in which students in Year 8 (aged 12-13) spend a week living full-time in a fenced off, wooded corner of the school grounds. Students are allocated into single sex hut groups of four or five students and student leaders are elected to run daily Village meetings. Each hut group sleeps in a hut they have constructed themselves and each hut cooks their own food over a campfire which they have built.

There is no electricity, and no electronic devices including mobile phones are permitted in the Village. During the day there is a wide range of activities available, such as blacksmithing, bush craft, foraging, rough science, geography (sustainability), story telling, drumming, making mud pizza ovens and astronomy – at night! Students may choose which of these activities, if any, to participate in.

The Village Project is firmly embedded into the Year 8 calendar and curriculum and is used very much as a learning tool rather than a disruption to learning. The main aims are to provide the conditions for creativity, independent learning, and the development of persistence and perseverance. A group of 'Village' teachers has become the core team who will live in the Village. The Year 8s are prepared for life in the Village during PHSE sessions and Form Hours that take place starting from February.

Each student has their own Village workbook which they use during the pre-Village learning sessions. During Village week they will be able to record their observations, refer to the preparatory PHSE sessions, write a diary and refer to these workbooks in a post-Village analysis. Here, the Year 8s and Village core team will look at the learnings and discuss what key elements can be taken and applied throughout the whole school.

The Village Project has become an explicit focus of teaching before the week starts and the core team of Village teachers has considered how all learning principles can link into the current curriculum. This core team has been responsible for the delivery of the pre-Village learning sessions and workshops that have become embedded into the PHSE and Form Hour curriculum. This is a time when the students learn all the skills they will need for living in the village, including practical skills such as fire lighting, cooking on an open fire, hut building, the skills and safety rules for using knives.

## Perseverance and persistence

The main theme of The Village Project 2015, this topic has been a source of much discussion in Form Hour and PHSE. A lot of the activity in the Village requires persistence and perseverance. Often the answers to tasks in the Village are not known immediately: the team has to come up with strategies



*Good companions*

and see them through until they succeed. For example, if the fires don't light, pupils have to re-do the task and keep trying, their motivation being that they need to prepare a meal or keep warm.

Sometimes, at the beginning of the Village week, if the weather is cold or wet and a hut group hasn't really mastered the art of lighting a fire in those conditions, cooking a meal can take a long time. However, they quickly learn how to overcome these problems and by the second day most hut groups are in control of their fires. Those that are still struggling are usually helped by a neighbouring hut and only as a last resort do teachers step in.

If the huts aren't constructed in the correct sequence, the team will have to undo their work and start again. A problem sometimes encountered with the huts is that they are either too hot or too cold, so the students have to find the problem and fix it. Generally speaking it could be said that life in the Village is quite hard, but by the end of the week most students seem to be significantly tougher.

The pupils have learned strategies for good communication, how to resolve conflict using role play to enact various scenarios, and how to complain in a positive, useful way. These strategies will be helpful during Village week when living in such close proximity will naturally create an environment for conflict. At the end of one Village a pupil revealed that her tidiness standards were so different from the rest of her hut that it caused her a lot of stress and frequent conflict with the other hut members.

However by the second half of the week she had learnt to be much more tolerant and was clearly pleased with her own learning. What was also interesting was that at no point did she want to involve the staff, feeling that it was something that they needed to deal with on their own. It would be nice to think that the conflict resolution training the students received had something to do with the way they handled this issue.

Before setting out to build their huts, the pupils learned about team building and how careful observation can reveal each other's strengths which can be deployed purposefully in such tasks as constructing the huts and putting the final touches together. The act of hut building is used to discuss skills required to solve problems as a team. Pupils will also be set a sustainability project that will require team building and problem-solving skills.

The huts take about 20 hours to build and the process is hard work, so if there are any problems with a team, it is then that they become apparent as they become amplified. During the latest Village, most of the hut teams worked really well together, but there was one group of five that had too many jokers and passengers in it, with most of the work being done by just two boys. The result of this was that everything took far too long and the boys who were working became annoyed.

In this situation, a member of staff volunteered to work with them, which had a dramatic effect. Each member of the group started discovering their own strengths which resulted in a very effective team going into the Village and it lasted for the whole week, with very few words of encouragement needed to keep them going. This kind of group mentoring has proved very effective over the years especially as the skills of the staff improve.

The Year 8 pupils have learned about the various structures of governance that exist to make a community function well.



*Using a knife safely*

In learning about this, the whole year chose to elect two Village co-leaders (one male, one female) who led the pupils and ran the daily meetings. This process is not straightforward and can take quite a few sessions to work out.

What might seem an obvious lesson that has come out of the six Villages that we have now done, is that the quality of the leaders chosen can have a subtle but significant impact on the character of the resulting Village and each Village has its own distinctive character. The students also discussed what comprises a successful and happy community and what it takes to be a good citizen.

Sustainability is already part of the Year 8 Geography curriculum. Pupils are asked to work together to come up with solutions for making their Village as sustainable as possible. Each hut is encouraged to put their own ideas together and to implement them in the Village. During Village week, the pupils will undertake the Sustainability Challenge to come up with ideas to make the whole school more sustainable. These ideas will be put into place post-Village and will involve the whole school.

The Village project fosters independence and initiative. Pupils' motivations for learning are not dictated by teachers and the daily activities are chosen purely by the pupils

## Teamwork



*Blacksmithing*

according to the rules they set themselves, but all students must end up with something significant to show that represents their time in the Village and this can take any form.

Some teachers come into the Village purely to facilitate the activities and they come in and out of the Village throughout the week. The core Village team of six teachers is present throughout, day and night, and their main role is to support and guide. Where necessary, they remind pupils what they have learned during the PHSE and Form Hour sessions and encourage them to apply the strategies.

Claire Murphy, Head of Year 8, has been involved in the Village Project for the past three years and says that the teachers learn as much as the pupils. "The Village experience is a fantastic learning journey for us all. We learn how to be hands-off so that the pupils take responsibility for their learning and we learn so much about the children. Sometimes the natural leaders, the confident pupils, are very different in the Village and can struggle, whilst the quieter, less popular pupils, can come into their own and shine in their role within their team. This is very noticeable to us and their peers and gives these kids huge confidence post-Village."

The Village Project 2014 was the subject of a research project undertaken by a PhD student from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. The study concluded that the Village creates conditions for ways of learning that are often not seen in contemporary schools. The environment offers

many opportunities for students to develop social awareness, empathy and understanding of community. Compared to a classroom setting, students become much more reliant on each other for basic needs and to create a pleasant living environment.

The research also concluded that the Village Project was an important learning tool for independent learning. It provides an environment in which students' motivations for learning behaviour has a direct impact on their wellbeing rather than being influenced by incentives or disciplinary measures from teachers.

Claire Murphy, Head of Year 8, agrees: "In this environment the children learn so much about themselves because they are the ones making choices and they are the ones engaging with each other and the activities rather than being led by a teaching team on a school camp or following the daily school timetable. They quickly learn that it is their own responsibility to make it a success. They discover what they are good at, what they are not strong at and what they enjoy doing. They surprise themselves constantly."

*Stephen De Brett is former Head of DT and PHSE at King Alfred School and masterminded the first Village Project in 1994. Stephen leads the core Village team of staff and oversees all Village Projects. To watch a film about The Village Project visit [www.kingalfred.org.uk](http://www.kingalfred.org.uk).*

# It's the adolescent, stupid

Kevin Stannard reviews Tony Little's

*An Intelligent Person's Guide to Education*

published by Bloomsbury in July 2015 ISBN: 9781472913111

This is an engaging book, well-written and amounting to a sustained reflection on and substantial defence of the values of a *liberal* education. Perhaps surprisingly, it's not about the 'politics' of education. More than anything else, it's about adolescents, and what to do with them.

True, the early chapters focus on general themes exercising anyone who thinks about education (the purpose of schools, debates around the curriculum, teacher qualifications), but these are followed by chapters on the education of *teenagers* (the nature of adolescence itself; the specific challenges summed up by 'sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll'; character and discipline in schools; the role of the imagination; spirituality defined as the capacity for 'wonder').

Subsequent chapters might appear to have been bolted on as specific items of interest, addressing themes and debates arising out of Little's background and experience (Reading – the disposition not the place; school improvement – with case studies from Slough – the place, not the disposition; the case for boarding; co-ed versus single-sex schooling).

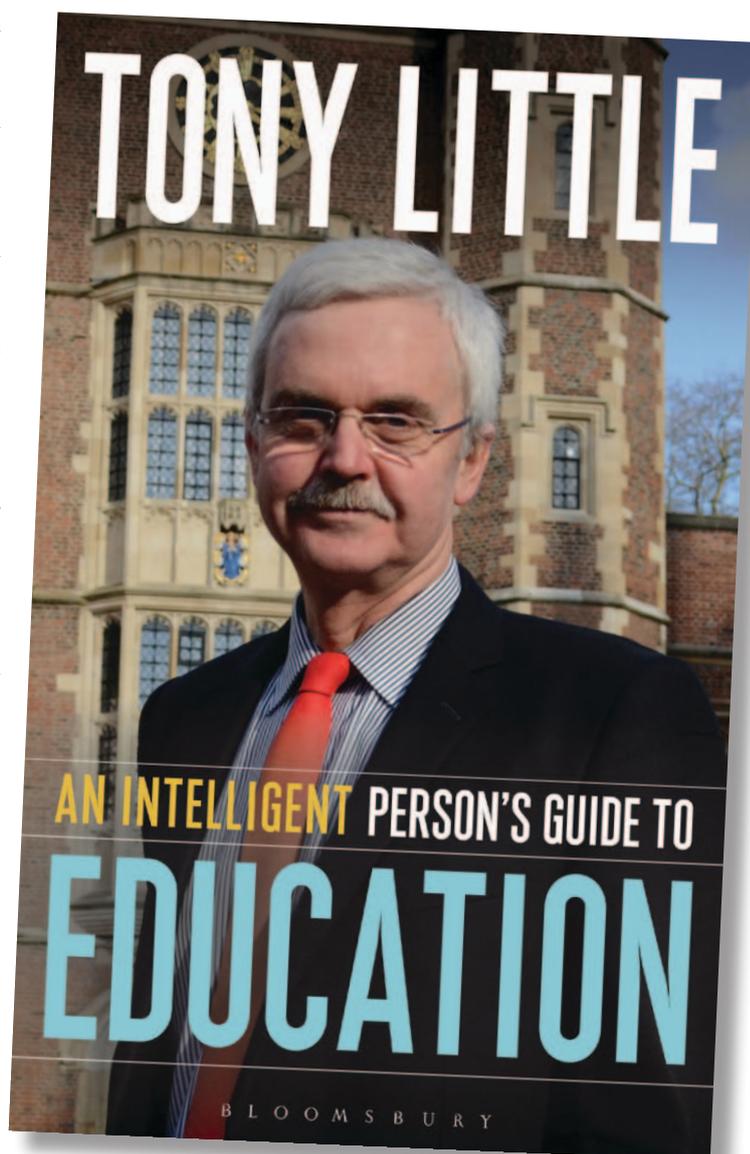
Towards the end, there is a chapter on school leadership, summarising the various competing constituencies with which a Head has to deal. The final chapter sets out the key questions that parents should ask of a school – with some additional questions that parents should ask of themselves.

The triptych thus created is explained at the start by Little's observation that three questions are frequently asked of him by parents: What makes a good school? What has he learned about teenagers? What does a Head actually do?

As a Headmaster's memoir, it is refreshingly free of any temptation to settle scores or yell "I told you so" from the top of Lupton's Tower. It is free of pomposity, and also of jargon (the extended discussion of the neuroscience of adolescence notwithstanding). The register adopted reflects the author. It also reflects the clever choice of ostensible audience: the parents of teenagers, rather than educational insiders.

That the book is well written, neither rancorous nor hectoring; that it is heuristic but not homespun; and that it is ultimately uplifting – should not be surprising. Across each of the chapters runs a narrative arc, such that the chapters are underpinned by and serve to reinforce a coherent, articulate and inspiring vision of education. That shouldn't be a surprise, either. But there are surprises here, insofar as Little's viewpoint has the capacity to provoke original reflections on the taken-for-granted.

Who are the heroes of the book? Old English educators such as A C Benson; modern Heads who manage to turn around failing schools; Heads who equate leadership with 'service'; teachers who instinctively operate well beyond



their job description; support staff, who often show greater loyalty than teachers to the schools they serve (*Goodbye Mr Chips* might serve as an encomium for a retiring member of the catering staff); but most of all, the students themselves. If I had to summarise the wisdom of this book, it is in applying old-fashioned values of education to address and enlighten the schooling of today's teenagers.

And so to the first surprise. Little doesn't exactly offer an apology for Dr Keate, the notorious mid-Victorian flogging Headmaster of Eton; but he sets him against the 'priggish' and moralising Dr Arnold (of Rugby) in a remarkable way. Keate,

PLEASE NOTE  
Our prices will be held until August.  
There will be a new price structure from September  
Please call us for details

## LACAUK LIMITED

EDUCATION • INTERVENTION • PREVENTION

Arming young people with all the facts they need on drug, novel psychoactive substance, alcohol and tobacco misuse, cyber bullying and body image, thus enabling them to make informed choices both during their school years and in later life.

### CONTACT US

#### BARRY EVANS

Telephone : 020 3544 6392

Mobile : 07778 643209

Email : [barry.evans@lacauk.co.uk](mailto:barry.evans@lacauk.co.uk)

#### BOB TAIT

Telephone : 020 3544 6392

Mobile : 07852 333667

Email : [bob.tait@lacauk.co.uk](mailto:bob.tait@lacauk.co.uk)

#### PAUL RUBIN

Tel : 020 3544 6392

Mob : 07787 444643

Email : [paul.rubin@lacauk.co.uk](mailto:paul.rubin@lacauk.co.uk)

for all his corporal failings, understood that adolescence is a stage to be negotiated, not hastened or ignored in the passage from childhood to adulthood. In the central section of the book, Little sheds light on how great schools and great teachers help teenagers to navigate this stage, setting limits but also making allowances.

Little treads lightly, but the insights offered have enormous weight: 'Imagine hurtling along a country road in a vehicle that seems vastly over-powered and with a braking system that is clearly inadequate ... (and with) ... a fuzzy windscreen'. In his treatment of school discipline, and in his description of the apparently archaic daily disciplinary procedure known at Eton as 'the Bill', Little shows how good schools work to support and structure teenagers' worlds in a continuing negotiation.

This is not namby-pamby stuff: elsewhere he shows that the key to turning around failing schools is unrelenting attention to discipline, and the consistent application of a small number of very basic rules. The interest here, though, is how this lesson is set, not within a homily on school leadership as a top-down exercise in management machismo, but in the practice that comes from a nuanced understanding of, and sympathy for, the immensely complicated mental and physical world of the adolescent.

The unremitting focus on understanding students and where their minds and bodies might be at, provides an equally surprising prism through which to reflect on school leadership. Later in the book, Little reflects on leadership as 'service', something that comes most easily if the focus is on the pupils – contrasting with much of the orthodox literature on leadership, which assumes that running a school is the same as running any small or medium sized business, involving adult employees and equally adult customers. Earlier in the book, in the chapter on the purpose of schools, Little argues that good schools actively engage their students in reflecting on the purpose of formal education.

Schools exist to educate young people. Secondary schools exist to educate adolescents. With this in mind, the curriculum, for Little, stands or falls *as a whole*. He is dismissive of those who seek to 'bolt on' discrete modules for leadership, enterprise, citizenship, character, even happiness. A properly liberal, holistic, curriculum would embed those dimensions organically: 'Effective education is not delivered in isolated segments.' Little deals summarily with the limitations of exams and narrow measures of school success, stressing that it is not what is taught, but the way it is taught, that counts. He argues convincingly for a focus on the whole-school culture.

In this respect, the vocation of the teacher is wide-ranging and not limited to subject specialism. Initial teacher training and qualifications, are, according to Little, next to useless. He argues for the flexibility to appoint any promising individual, whether from PGCE courses, academia, the army, business, the city or the law, and the commitment to train them on the job. Effective teachers are those who assume the responsibility to promote the whole-school vision of the school, and who see their charges as flawed individuals at a vulnerable and impressionable age.

Who are the villains of this piece, who stand against the fulfilment of a broad, humane education? Anyone (in government and in school leadership) who sets too much store by data and exam results; any teachers who, by their own failure, let down colleagues and pupils; those parents who

set out to bully Heads and teachers: 'Parents are sometimes wrong, even about their own children.' And governors – Little reserves unusually vituperative comment for the 'pettiness, lack of vision and sheer incompetence' of some governing bodies. But this is not a political polemic. Little was not a political Headmaster. That is what gives this book its charm, and arguably its power.

Finally, to address the elephant in the room. Is Eton England? Is it even Berkshire? Little acknowledges that Eton has advantages over many other schools, in particular the advantages of time, resources and tradition (the latter providing a basis for confidence in avoiding bandwagons, embracing authentic innovation and standing up for a liberal vision).

Little readily acknowledges that independent schools play by rather different (and are subject to rather fewer) rules, and have substantial advantages over state-maintained schools. Nevertheless, it would be a great shame if the book's generalisable insights on education and on adolescence were ignored by those who confuse the message with the medium.

As for time, he offers an analysis of boarding that highlights the importance of the non-academic aspects of education such as extra-curricular activities and pastoral support. For time-strapped day schools, the boarding school day is tantalising in its expansiveness. But there are transferable lessons: counter-intuitively perhaps, day schools could look at ring-fencing down-time (lunch-times especially), and at the virtues of vertical tutorial structures, aiming to replicate the benefits of interaction between pupils of different ages.

Are the lessons of Eton (or Oakham or Chigwell) applicable to the independent sector as a whole? A suggestive reference is to be found on page 20, where Little tells the story of a boy who failed a history A level module, and lost his first choice place at university, because he 'over-answered' a question, producing a degree-level answer, the mark-scheme for which demanded a much more prosaic response.

The anecdote's significance lies in the assumed accountability: Eton is a school which can squarely blame the exam board and its inadequacies. For many Heads of independent schools, life is not so simple. Accountability can be very messy.

However, the underlying message is clear: schools must use all the resources at their disposal to achieve their aims of educating the *whole* pupil, preparing them not just for exams, or for higher education, or even for future careers. The job is to prepare them to be individually fulfilled and socially adjusted adults – not by ignoring or taming adolescence, but by understanding it, embracing it, and bringing it to successful completion. A lot of it comes down to schools that are prepared to let boys be boys (and girls be girls).

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

# iBoarding

You can solve 4 problems today in 5 minutes!

*You just need a pen*

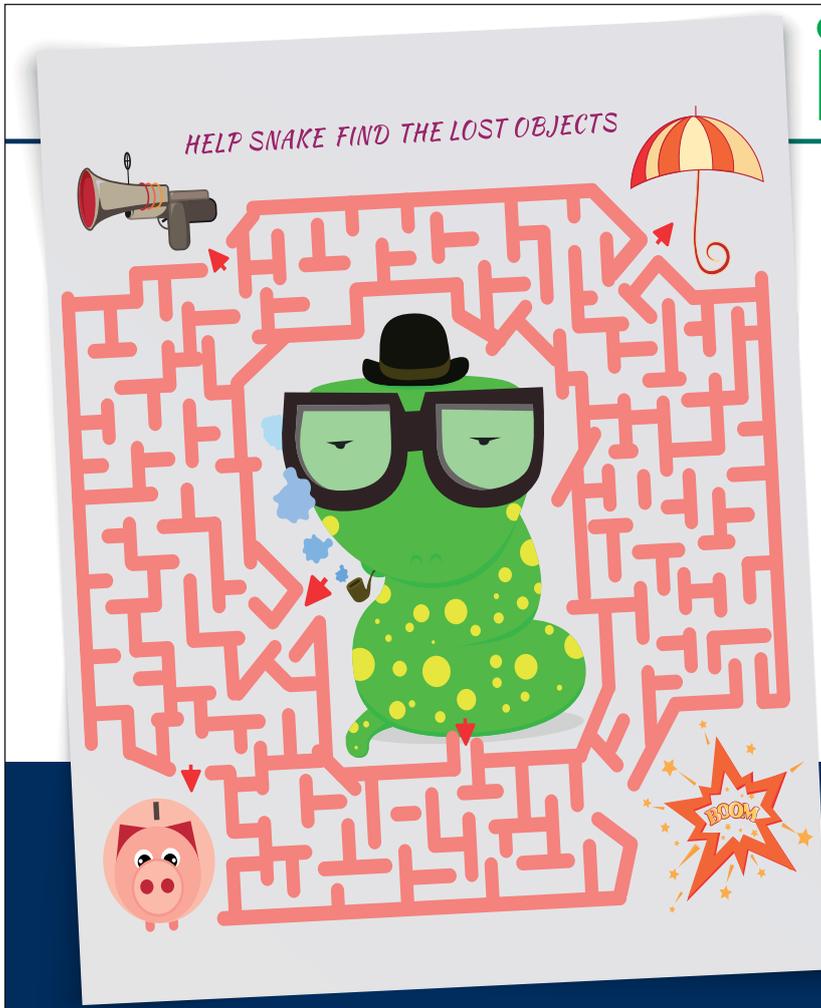
Imagine what would happen if you spent a day with us!

Simply boarding is leading the change in education to nurture a new generation of leaders for the world ahead. And it starts with **YOU** - connecting with us.

We simply connect talent, opportunity and innovation. Check out our courses...

[www.simplyboarding.com](http://www.simplyboarding.com)

or email [wecare@simplyboarding.com](mailto:wecare@simplyboarding.com) for more info



**The American University of Rome**  
where the city becomes your classroom



THE AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY OF ROME

Learn more about us at  
[www.aur.edu](http://www.aur.edu)



# A mathematical tour-de-force

Francis Chalmers reviews

*The Poetry of Proof* by Rebecca Siddall

Published by Telchine Press; ISBN: 978-1501010927

This is an unusual and interesting book for several reasons: it is the only collection I know of mathematical proofs expressed in poetical form; furthermore the author Rebecca Siddall is a Year 10 student at Oundle School. She has taken 50 mathematical proofs (of a level accessible to anyone with GCSE mathematics) and expressed them in verse, with the style and form of the poems carefully selected to match the mathematical content. The book is a tour-de-force, beautifully produced, long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be interesting!

The author has taken as a starting point her love of both mathematics and poetry. In her introduction she cites Bertrand Russell's opinion that 'Mathematics ... possesses a beauty cold and austere' and that 'the touchstone of the highest excellence is to be found in Mathematics as surely as poetry' as a motivating factor. Rebecca decided to see if she could combine poetry and mathematical proof in a way that is less

forbidding and more fun. As she says, 'must appreciating either sound quite so ... chilly?'

I particularly enjoyed Proof Number 6: *Whether a given integer is divisible by three*, which includes at the start of the fourth stanza a paean to one of the fundamental principles of number theory: 'Ahh, great Associative Law of Addition'. Also Proof Number 7: *Doubling a triangle's side length quadruples its area*, where Rebecca sensibly dispenses with words altogether but still achieves a poetic result.

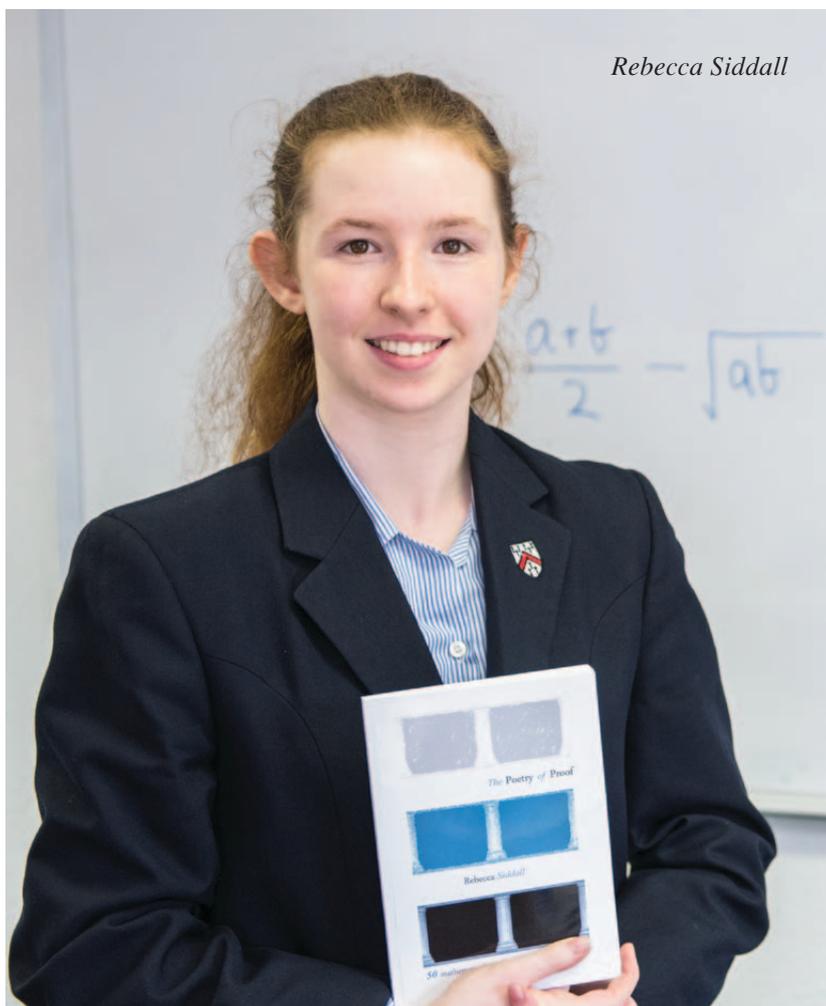
As a maths teacher, I am also indebted to the author for her nice demonstration in Proof Number 15 that *The product of minus one and minus one is one*, which is later used in Proof Number 24: *The product of two real negative numbers is positive*. I shall be using these from now on with my KS3 and KS4 classes (with respectful acknowledgement, of course).

Trawling the archives of the history of mathematics, mathematicians who also pursued successful careers as published poets are relatively rare. It is not clear to me why this should be so: mathematicians' accounts of their moments of inspiration and the way they describe their appreciation of the beauty and elegance of important mathematical results are surprisingly similar to the descriptions that writers give of the experiences that have inspired their best work.

Perhaps it had something to do with Plato, who strongly advocated the study of mathematics as man's way of knowing the mind of God, but accused poets of being the enemies of truth and spreading 'mental poison'. Nevertheless there are some shining examples, including the 11th century Persian philosopher Omar Khayyam, who made a lasting contribution in both fields with his work on Euclid's Parallel Postulate and his spiritual poem the *Rubaiyat*. Closer to our own time, of course, we have Charles Dodgson, an Oxford lecturer in mathematical logic, who published poetry and prose as Lewis Carroll, but also produced some excellent teaching materials and games that combined both his talents.

I think Rebecca Siddall has succeeded in illustrating a really fundamental point about communicating mathematics – important results are often much more memorable when expressed felicitously. Here are two of my favourites:

The Einstein Field Equations: 'Space tells matter how to move; matter tells space how to curve.'



Rebecca Siddall

## MARK BEAUMONT

Broadcaster . Athlete & Adventurer . Author

'A brilliant talk as part of thinking beyond school, in order to inspire and motivate pupils to make choices on their futures' Wellington College

Mark hosts regular lectures, workshops and is guest speaker at school prize-givings throughout the UK, sharing lessons from his record breaking expeditions and presenting skills from his work with the BBC. The World Record for cycling around the world, rowing a boat 800 miles north of the Arctic circle and interviewing athletes in 68 nations in the build up to the Commonwealth Games are just some of Mark's achievements in recent years. Mark has a passion for inspiring young people and is able to share key lessons that help shape careers.



Contact for enquiries  
info@markbeaumontonline.com  
www.markbeaumontonline.com

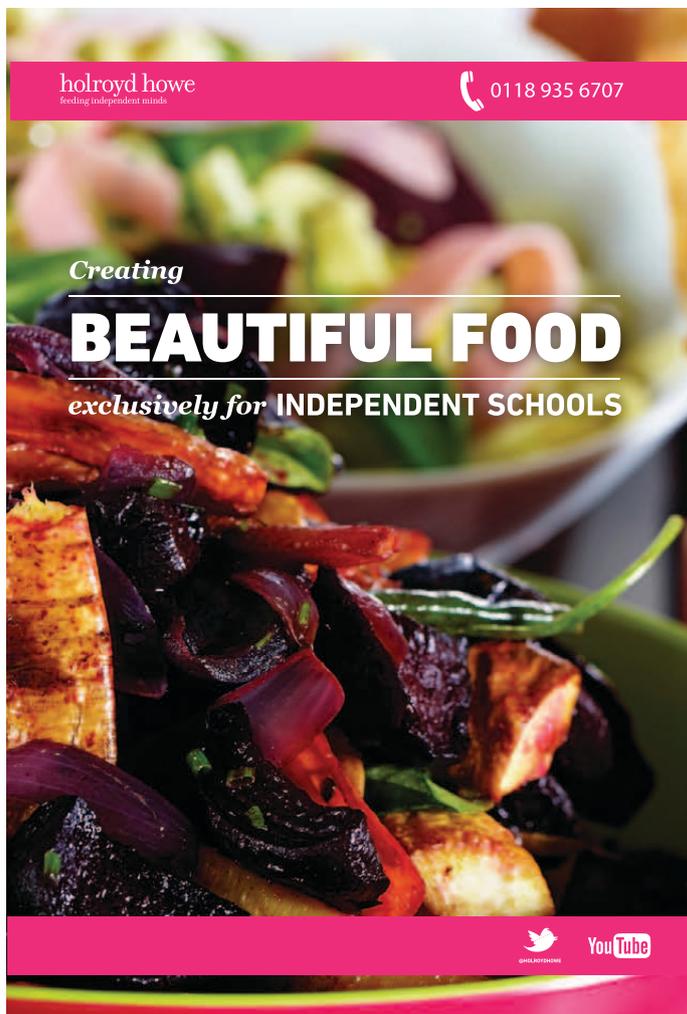
holroyd howe  
feeding independent minds

0118 935 6707

Creating

# BEAUTIFUL FOOD

exclusively for INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



YouTube

synergia  
COACHING

Awaken, **Unlock** & Achieve...



Visit us at:  
**Stand 6 HMC Conference**  
6-9 October 2015  
Seminar by Tamsin Martle:  
*The Power of Coaching in Education*  
**Stand 10 GSA Conference** gsa  
23-24 November 2015

...with the **Leadership Development** experts

We specialise in working with Independent Schools at all levels, developing Leadership and Management skills from HOYs, HODs, House Parents and the Senior Leadership Team and delivering outstanding results at Synergia INSET days.

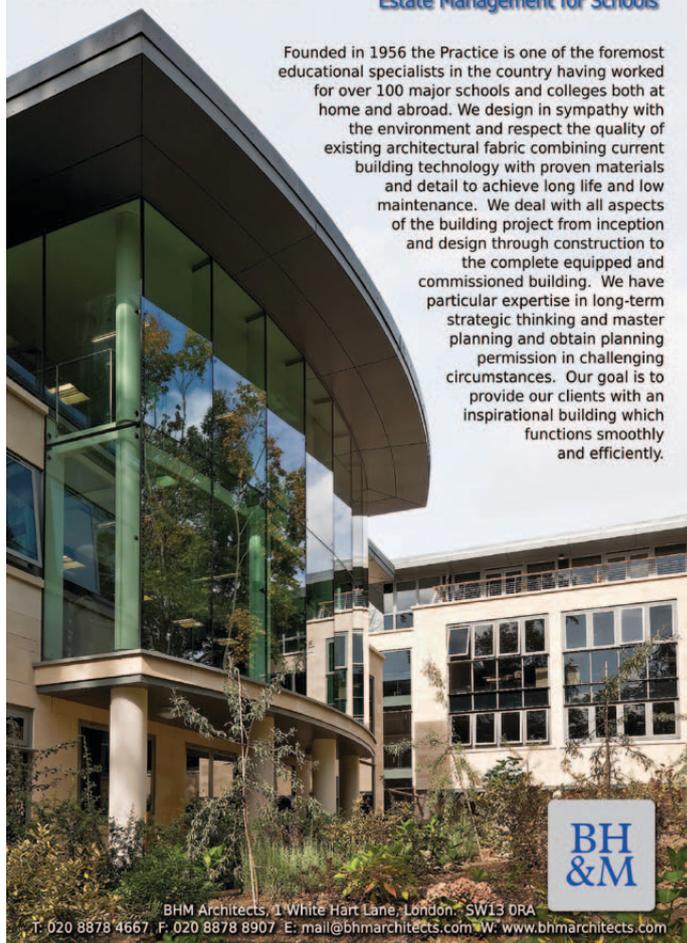
For more information visit [www.synergiacoaching.co.uk](http://www.synergiacoaching.co.uk)  
e: clare.barnett@synergiacoaching.co.uk  
t: 07909 962916



BHM Architects

Specialists in Building Design and Estate Management for Schools

Founded in 1956 the Practice is one of the foremost educational specialists in the country having worked for over 100 major schools and colleges both at home and abroad. We design in sympathy with the environment and respect the quality of existing architectural fabric combining current building technology with proven materials and detail to achieve long life and low maintenance. We deal with all aspects of the building project from inception and design through construction to the complete equipped and commissioned building. We have particular expertise in long-term strategic thinking and master planning and obtain planning permission in challenging circumstances. Our goal is to provide our clients with an inspirational building which functions smoothly and efficiently.



BH  
&M

BHM Architects, 1 White Hart Lane, London, SW13 0RA  
T: 020 8878 4667 F: 020 8878 8907 E: mail@bhmarcchitects.com W: www.bhmarcchitects.com

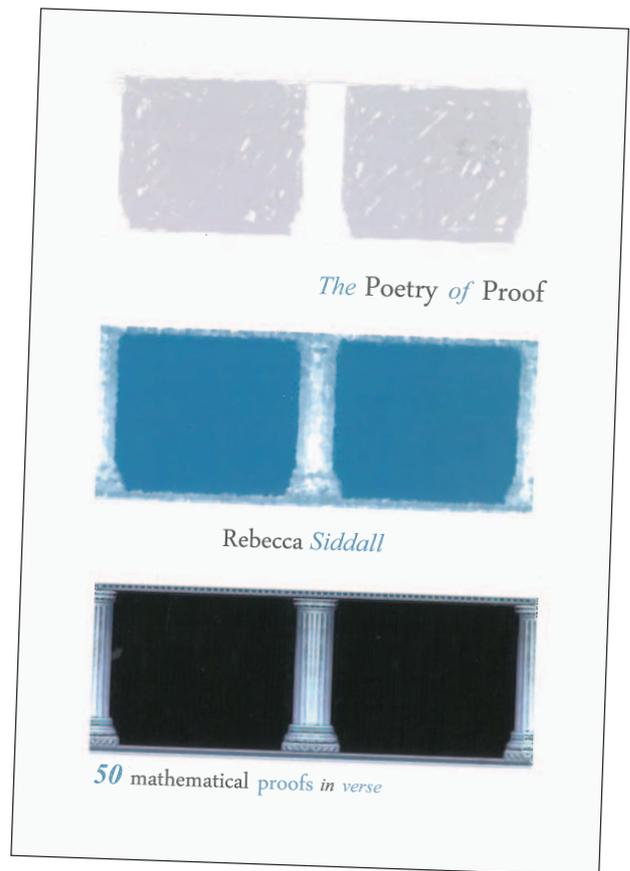
Definition of a Compact Set: 'If a city is compact, it can be guarded by a finite number of arbitrarily near-sighted policemen.'

Rebecca Siddall is clearly a highly intelligent and multi-talented student. Judging from her elegantly minimalist website, she throws herself energetically into everything she is interested in, sets herself some phenomenal targets, and then achieves them, all while doing her GCSEs. She has already achieved distinction in the UK Junior and Intermediate Mathematical Olympiads, won a plethora of prizes in scientific and literary essay competitions, and received the award for best first film at the Swedenborg International Short Film Festival for her film *Arcana*, for which she also composed the musical score. Although she enjoys all her subjects, Rebecca says her current intention is to study mathematics, further mathematics, biology, physics, and chemistry at A level or Pre-U.

There is something of an historical precedent for brilliant young female scientists and mathematicians bursting onto the academic scene with an important discovery. Ada, Countess of Lovelace, the daughter of Lord Byron, worked closely with Charles Babbage, the father of modern computing, and was the one of the first to express coherently the potential power of a machine that could store both programmes and data.

Jocelyn Bell Burnell was working towards her PhD in radio astronomy at Cambridge in 1967 when she observed unusual signals from a distant star, which she pursued resolutely in the face of the scepticism of her senior colleagues, and which were eventually identified as Pulsars – rapidly rotating neutron stars emitting regular pulses of radiation. (Two of those colleagues were later awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics from which Bell Burnell herself was excluded.)

A few years ago, the Irish mathematician Sarah Flannery launched her academic career with a bang when at the age of 16 she won a prestigious prize for her design of a new



Front cover.

data encryption algorithm with the potential to revolutionise internet security (she tells the story in her excellent book *In Code*). Rebecca Siddall, who is 15 now, says, "My ambition is to become a scientist and make a contribution to the world." I wouldn't bet against her.

*Francis Chalmers teaches mathematics at Norwich High School for Girls GDST.*

## Oxford movement – from New Inn Hall Street to Summertown

David Gibbs reviews Malcolm Oxley's

*A New History of St Edward's School, Oxford, 1863-2013*

published by St Edward's School, April 2015; ISBN 9780993218606

Inspired by the Oxford Movement, the mid-Victorian attempt to revitalise the Church of England by taking it back to its catholic roots, St Edward's School, Oxford, had an extremely uncertain start. The High Church priests of the time were long on their vision of godliness and good learning but short on sound economic management. Except this one thing: they were unfailingly persistent in explaining to wealthy benefactors how they could do God's work.

The Gibbs family (sadly unrelated to this reviewer) made a vast fortune in the 1840s and '50s from the guano extracted from rocky outcrops off the coast of Peru. Bird droppings built up over hundreds of years, rich in nitrates, proved to be an excellent fertiliser as Europe's agriculture was revolutionised. The family poured this wealth into High Church educational projects – Keble College, the Sussex Woodard schools, all with vast chapels, and, at a critical stage and in large measure, St Edward's. *Continued* →

It was the unconditional support of Henry Huck Gibbs, later Lord Aldenham, which ensured that St Edward's did not fall into the hands of the developers who were rampant in late Victorian north Oxford. Rather, his wealth ensured the sure foundations which have created the flourishing 'Teddies' of today which has recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, the motivation for this *New History*.

Immensely well researched, lucidly written with a fine turn of phrase, Malcolm Oxley, who taught history at the School for 37 years, has written an insider's account. At 462 pages it is a lengthy read, although rarely without interest or relevance. There are several pages of photographs at the centre of the book but for the most part they are too small to be fully appreciated.

The documentation is extensive and records a world that has long been lost. The Reverend Henry Kendall was appointed Warden, aged 36, in 1925 and stayed for 29 years. He was widely revered in the High Church world, especially by his governors. Dynamic and energetic, he raised numbers and crucially he acquired further land in the rapidly growing suburb of Summertown in the late 1920s. In many respects he created the modern school and made it viable.

The verbatim accounts of brutal beatings both by prefects and teachers (including the Warden, whose ritual featured drawing the curtains and locking the doors) and the endemic bullying are, however, heart rending. One must be cautious of isolated quotes. Three from many of the 1930s and 40s are examples of a wealth of corroborative evidence:

...although amiable enough and a great character he was to my mind also (it is of course sheer heresy to say so) a sanctimonious old humbug – an opinion no doubt stemming from the time when I suffered a birching at his hands (with Matron standing by with an iodine-soaked pad, the application of which was more painful than the birching) for some trivial offence. How can a grown man in a dog-collar behave thus to a fellow creature?

He had a seaside villa at Mevagissey whither he invites a coterie of favourite boys to stay in the summer.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that life at the school was dominated by two elements: fear and conformity.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the first measure of Kendall's successor in 1954, Frank Fisher, was to abolish compulsory nude bathing and insist on trunks.

Of course, we look at these events from today's perspective. We need to remind ourselves that caning was not outlawed in state schools until 1987. The author does however produce much evidence which we can only describe as saddening. It is the historian's task to describe what happened and this Mr



Oxley does admirably. We, in retrospect, can reflect on the way in which everyday life at a school like St Edward's has changed so much for the better in a matter of two generations.

Interesting, too, is the way in which the religious dimension to school life has changed over 150 years. An Anglo-Catholic religious community in its early years, one of its early Headmasters gave this injunction in his set of rules for boys, describing them as, or, perhaps more realistically, hoping that they would become

Christian gentlemen ... that have sworn to fight manfully against the world, the flesh and the Devil and to live in unity and godly love with one another.

Many of the staff were clerics and all the Wardens, bar one, until 1954. Since then there have been only lay Wardens.

Today the religious tone is very low key and is hardly mentioned in the school's publicity material. A key moment in its history was in 1927, when the school withdrew from the Woodard Corporation (or Society as it was then known) after a brief membership. This enabled it to forge its own identity and, crucially, keep control of its own finances. Now it is a highly successful and civilised co-educational school full of music and drama alongside its traditional sporting prowess. Its North Face Arts Centre is a splendid facility much used by the local community.

When St Edward's was founded, Oxford was a small, inconsequential university town, some way from London. After World War I it developed into a Midlands industrial town, dominated by William Morris (he of the cars, not the arts). Now it is a thriving post-industrial town, a satellite of London and with just about the fastest rising property prices in the land.

Reading this absorbing history, one is reminded of the way in which schools need to respond to their own local environment in a wider national context. Although they do need a certain degree of detachment, schools should never be islands, be it of religion, of class, of race or of income. Easier said than done, but the author has used his extensive scholarship to show us how one particular community has adapted its character and aims imaginatively and successfully over a century and a half.

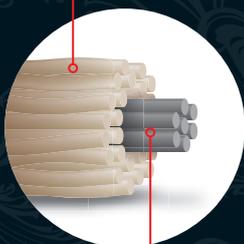
*David Gibbs was Headmaster at Chigwell School (1996-2007) and is the author of A School with a View - A History of Ardingly College, 1858-2008 and In Search of Nathaniel Woodard - Victorian Founder of Schools.*

*'The High Church priests of the time were long on their vision of godliness and good learning but short on sound economic management. Except this one thing: they were unfailingly persistent in explaining to wealthy benefactors how they could do God's work.'*

# Committed to Innovation, Dedicated to style.



60% COTTON  
OUTER



POLYESTER  
CORE 40%

## Bringing Real Innovation to Schoolwear

### The Problem

Parents love the non-iron and durability of polyester but want the comfort of cotton.

### Our Solution

**PerformanceCotton**<sup>®</sup> is a unique fibre. Developed by the world's leading mill and exclusively available to **Schoolblazer**. The central polyester strands deliver durability and non-iron properties. The outer cotton strands sit next to the skin for comfort.

### Another Solution from Schoolblazer.

**Schoolblazer** was founded with a simple mission; to bring real innovation in schoolwear through fabric, design and service. Performance Cotton is just one example of what makes us different: A relentless focus on the customers' needs and the drive and ability to deliver a genuine solution.

**Schoolblazer** ethically sources the best fabrics from across the world. Our designs are fresh, contemporary and smart using bespoke colours patterns and styles. Our revolutionary website allows simple online fitting and sizing choice with individualised name-tapes sewn in free of charge.

Call 01832 280011 [info@schoolblazer.com](mailto:info@schoolblazer.com) [www.schoolblazer.com](http://www.schoolblazer.com)

**schoolblazer**  
Exclusive uniforms. Bespoke service.



The choice of champions.



England cricket star Matthew Hoggard and Olympic hockey player Chloe Rogers know what it takes to be a winner. Skill, hard work, dedication – and sportswear that’s designed to help produce peak performance. That’s why they choose **Squadkit**, the performance range of sports kit from Schoolblazer, the UK’s leading supplier of school uniforms and sportswear to over 100 of the UK’s top schools.

There’s no substitute for young talent. But it helps if the athletes of the future receive the best possible preparation to fulfil their potential. **Squadkit** is dedicated to providing

quality sportswear for ambitious young athletes in schools across the country. Technology, protection, style,

**Squadkit’s** stylish range comprises advanced fabric technologies, designed to both enhance performance and offer maximum physical and psychological protection for young bodies and determined minds.

Like Chloe and Matthew, your students deserve the best. Help them reach their full potential, with **Squadkit**.

**Squadkit** exclusively available from Schoolblazer, UK leader in stylish schoolwear and sportswear

Call 01832 280011 [info@schoolblazer.com](mailto:info@schoolblazer.com) [www.schoolblazer.com](http://www.schoolblazer.com)



wear it. play it. win it.