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The magazine for  
independent schools





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Putney High School's new Tideway boathouse.  
See page 19.



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Writing in the *TES* on 21st March, John Dunsford drew attention to ‘eleven odd things about the education White Paper’. This irresistibly suggests the White Queen in *Through the Looking Glass* – “Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast” – which may account for some of the other ‘odd things’ that regularly emerge from Whitehall.

He suggested that announcing the education White Paper via the Chancellor’s Budget speech may have been a diversionary tactic designed to obscure bad news elsewhere. As it turned out, internecine strife totally eclipsed education and several other issues as the Conservative Party turned its attention and its knives inwards. But Lewis Carol’s whimsical humour is quite inadequate to describe the shenanigans currently on the bill in Sanctuary Buildings, which call for the pen of Dickens and are ominously reminiscent of Orwell.

Two ‘odd things’ should engage our special attention: the proposal that all schools should become academies; and the withdrawal of the parent category from the recommended template for a school’s governing body. These represent a double blow to local involvement, neither immediately fatal but both precursors of a degenerative weakening of the relationship between schools and their communities.

As things presently stand, the expression of local opinion can, at least in theory, change things in County Halls and in schools. The fact that this doesn’t often happen and that localism doesn’t always produce good outcomes is not the point. What matters is that schools should be part of their communities and that communities should be engaged with their schools. A remote academy chain cannot achieve that; nor can central government.

Local responsibility for a wide range of welfare issues will continue, but it will become increasingly challenging to fulfil this if the service providers are market-driven. Local authorities are left with a duty of care for all children including, of course, the problematic ones. They have a responsibility to find school places for all children, but they will not be running any schools into which to place them. In this, as in many other areas, they have responsibility without power.

Local education authorities may have had their critics, but they have also been responsible for some inspirational thinking. The Cambridgeshire Village Colleges and the extraordinary music provision in Leicestershire led by Eric Pinkett were prime examples of locally inspired initiatives. By the same token, although there cannot be a single head teacher in England who has not sometimes found their involvement a mixed blessing, parents are an integral part of the school community, qualifying, if any group does, for the repellent management-speak title ‘stake-holders’.

It is well-established good practice to seek a wide range of talents on a governing body, and the AGBIS guidelines identify education, finance, law, property, IT and HR as key areas. Parents may well provide expertise of this kind and, in addition, their presence as governors demonstrates that there is indeed a whole school community. It is important that a core of governors live near the school and that they are all committed to the school’s ethos, criteria that parents tend to fit.

Their lives will also take account of the school’s daily and annual timetable and they are the most likely to be willing to give up the considerable amount of time now required, especially in maintained schools. It is true to say that governing bodies must plan for the future, sometimes the quite distant future, whereas parents will inevitably have more short-term aims in view. But at least they are not backward looking, as that worst of all governors, the sentimental former pupil, is inclined to be.

The governors’ responsibilities now enshrined in legislation are daunting. An ever-increasing list of welfare, protection and safeguarding issues affects every member of the board, and they need to attend regular training sessions to make sure that the school is 100% compliant on all things.

Schools simply cannot afford to overlook governor candidates who, while they may lack certain specific skills, are committed to the school because it is educating their children and who are willing to carry their share of the management burden. Parents cannot be hired in, but good advice can. Mark Jefferies, Anthony Millard and Simon Henthorn all represent organisations that are there to help schools flourish.

*Continued overleaf* →

## Editorial

In the end, the most important quality of a good governor is sound judgement, which, some might say, would rule out politicians. In his Letter from America, Jason Morrow comments on the inflammatory and divisive nature of the nomination process currently taking place there and we can prepare ourselves for some of the same as the European referendum draws near. Although breezy self-assurance remains characteristic of the government, there are increasingly frequent moments when the disintegrating car driven round and round the circus ring by hapless clowns springs to mind.

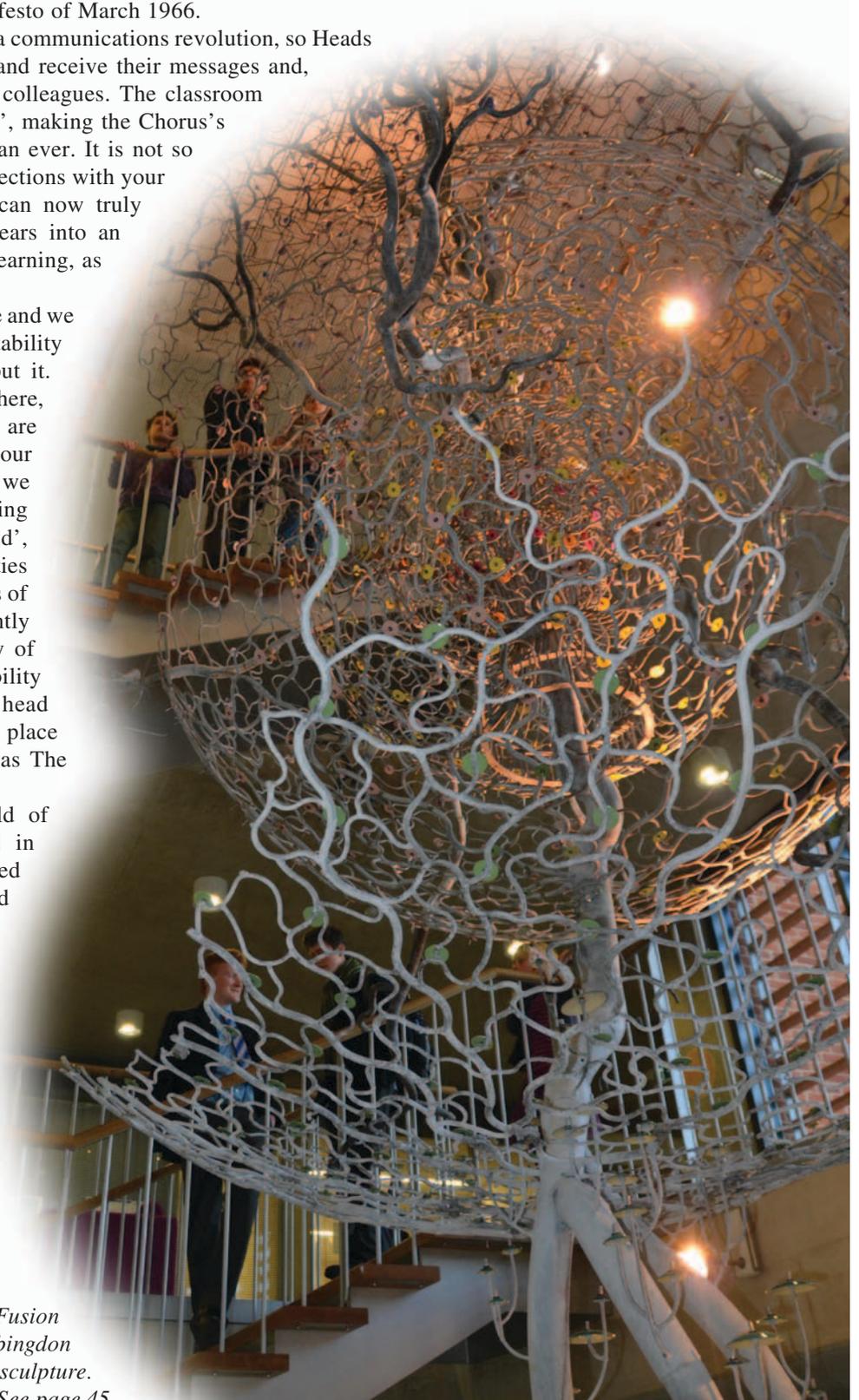
The art of party management is necessary if not noble. Harold Wilson is not currently well thought of, but, by getting his party elected to government and by keeping it in power, he gave politicians more principled than him the chance to change things. Picking up Michael Young's idea of a University of the Air, which chimed well with his 'white heat of technology' strap-line, he passed it on to Jennie Lee, as passionate and partisan a politician as he was pragmatic. She introduced proposals in Cabinet and her White Paper, preceding Mrs Morgan's by 50 years, pretty much to the day, led to a commitment to the Open University in the successful Labour election manifesto of March 1966.

Just as the OU was made feasible by a communications revolution, so Heads nowadays use every medium to send and receive their messages and, as Tim Jefferis reveals, to learn from colleagues. The classroom is now almost as 'virtual' as it is 'real', making the Chorus's prologue to *Henry V* more relevant than ever. It is not so much a matter of 'Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts' as the realisation that we can now truly turn 'the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass' with brilliant inter-active learning, as Stephen Burley writes.

The world has become a smaller place and we are far more aware of 'the strange mutability of human affairs', as Mr Pecksniff put it. Global news impacts on us everywhere, the job market is worldwide and we are ever aware of our responsibilities to our fellow human beings and the planet we share with them. Yet, as well as preparing children for this 'brave new world', schools are crucial to local communities and we depend upon them to be sources of understanding and harmony. Most recently they have been charged with the duty of preventing radicalisation, a responsibility that understandably alarms many head teachers, but there is surely no better place than a school to host such initiatives as The Bolton School Inter-faith panel.

How very different from the world of the Victorian Headmasters explored in *Two cheers for Dr Arnold* and shattered by the First World War – a world which saw this country's brief imperial dominion and the installation of English as a universal language. As we contemplate withdrawal from Europe and the partition of the United Kingdom, what set text might we recommend to achieve a sense of perspective? Having travelled widely and experienced a sobering education, Voltaire's *Candide* concludes that in the end 'il faut cultiver notre jardin'. There is much merit in the microcosm.

*The Science Fusion  
Tower, Abingdon  
School's new sculpture.  
See page 45.*



*Bishop's Stortford fire.*


# Managing a crisis and avoiding a disaster

'A fire broke out at 0240 in Robert Pearce House – a boys' boarding and day house at Bishop's Stortford College. All boys and staff were evacuated safely and the pupils are being accommodated elsewhere in the school.'

These were the opening words of a press release broadcast to the media early on Tuesday, 29th September. It was a challenging day for the College but one that saw the community pull together in the best possible way to overcome the events of the day.

At 02:40 a fire had broken out in the roof space of Robert Pearce House, an Arts and Crafts boarding house built in 1923. The alarm was raised and a well-drilled evacuation started. The fire quickly spread down to the second and first floors.

The College Headmaster was awakened by his daughter almost immediately as she had heard the alarms ringing. He quickly threw some clothes on over his pyjamas and ran across the road to RPH. With much relief he found all house parents, staff and boys safely gathered outside the House. Having followed their fire drill procedures to the letter, all were safely evacuated in under three minutes. The Fire Brigade arrived shortly afterwards.

The College's crisis management and disaster recovery plan swung into action. The Headmaster first woke up the deputy head i/c boarding and the bursar, who are both resident on campus. He had not been able to raise them via the telephone landline. He gathered together a crisis team, and the chair of governors was informed and key members of staff were called

to campus. An email and a text message were sent to parents advising that the College was closed for the day (although pre-prep remained open as it was sufficiently geographically removed from the roads closed by the fire).

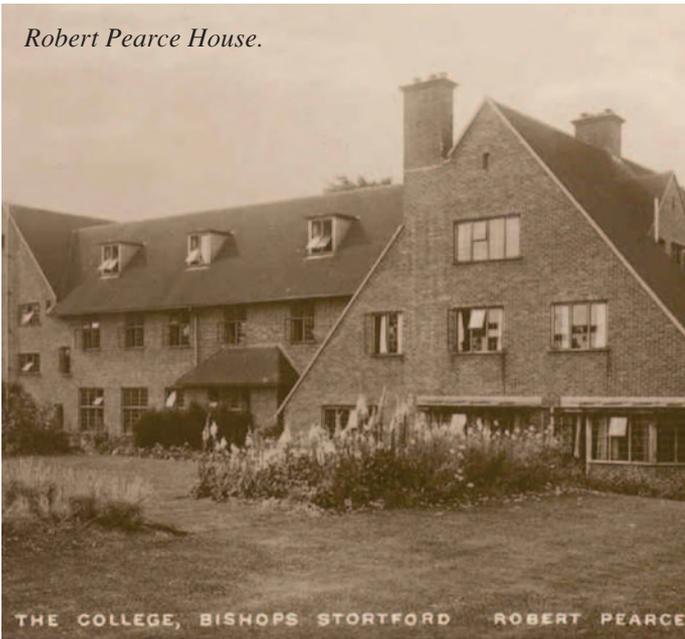
An announcement was also published on the College website and the Headmaster drafted, with the help of the fire service media liaison officer, a preliminary press release which the marketing manager broadcast shortly after 6am. Communications were clear, concise and frequent. A dedicated phone line was set up for concerned parents and neighbours. The team at reception handled many incoming enquiries, with many offers from parents of accommodation for displaced boys, clothing and support. It was truly humbling. Press and social media coverage was closely monitored throughout the day. Despite many of the images, particularly those on social media, being very dramatic, the focus was on the management of the situation and the fact that no one was injured.

The College is one of Bishop's Stortford's largest employers and is situated on a residential road. News spread quickly; many neighbours came out of their homes offering support and members of the press started to call or simply turn up on spec to cover 'the story'. The local rapid relief team, run by The Plymouth Brethren, set up on the side of the now closed road and provided bacon rolls and welcome tea and coffee to the fire crew and College staff throughout the morning, the food being kindly donated by Tesco.

Since all members of the boarding house had left with the night clothes they stood in, the College shop was opened at 7am and all the boys were issued with new uniforms and

# Survival

*Robert Pearce House.*



sports kit. We provided the boys with a list and money to go into town and purchase items such as shoes, clothing, underwear and toiletries. With a little shuffling, all 23 full-time boarders were found alternative accommodation in School House (flexi boarding was suspended in both Houses) and a temporary day house was set up in the sixth form centre. The house parents and the resident tutor were also found alternative accommodation on site.

Throughout the morning press enquiries were fielded, the Headmaster gave short interviews to visiting journalists and television crews (sporting an unshaven face, all the while still in his pyjamas but now with jeans and a sweat shirt over the top!) and the fire crews battled on. At one point the water main on Maze Green Road burst, such was the high demand for water. The tenders were taken down to the swimming pool and filled from there until alternative supplies could be hooked up. The energy of all involved was palpable. The fire crews were good humoured yet professional, dogged in their determination to conquer the devastation and kept all those concerned updated. At around 10am the roof of the now burned out building fell in and the decision was taken to collapse part of the front gable end wall in order to make it safer. It was a grim sight.

By mid-afternoon the fire was under control and the fire investigators, insurance assessors and structural engineers were keeping the bursar and his estates team busy. The good news was that the College would be re-opened in the morning with a staggered start and traffic re-direction in place and academic life could return to normal. The following afternoon the College put out another statement:

A fire broke out at 0240 in Robert Pearce House on Tuesday 29th September – a boys' boarding and day house at Bishop's Stortford College.

All boys and staff were evacuated safely. The 23 boarders, the House Parents and their daughter and another member of the academic staff have all been re-homed. A temporary day house has been set up in another school building and the boarders have all been welcomed into School House. Boys' flexi-boarding is currently suspended.

Approximately 40 firefighters from Hertfordshire and Essex attended the fire which started in the roof. The fire, which spread quickly destroyed the roof and the top two floors of the house, is now extinguished.

The College community is extremely thankful that no one is hurt. Much gratitude is also extended to the wider community, parents, schools and friends who have offered their support, their homes, clothes and much more at this challenging time.

The College was re-opened on Wednesday, 30th September (although Pre-Prep had remained open on 29th).

In the days following the fire, a communications plan was drafted ensuring that parents were kept informed. The College insurers and loss adjusters worked quickly and methodically, the local council expedited the planning process and construction of a new temporary boarding house is well underway – we hope the boys and house parents will have moved in by half term (February, 2016).

So what did we learn from these terrible events?

Never underestimate the value of a fire drill. The boys had practised a night-time drill in the week before the fire and thank goodness they did!

The power of team-work. SMT worked tremendously well together and the bursar's team also made an incredibly valuable contribution to managing things including implementing a one way traffic system the day after the fire in order to circumvent the road closure. Essentially, the Headmaster became outward-facing and led team meetings and people management, delegating tasks as necessary and the bursar faced inwards, leading on logistics.

Communication is key. Parents appreciated being kept up-to-date and informed. The media, whilst persistent, were all kind to us and have remained so.

Our crisis management and disaster recovery plan worked. It had been through its annual review and was on the Headmaster's desk!

Keep documents secure. Our senior school admissions officer, having spent many hours of the last weeks and months helping our international boarders to replace lost passports and visas, will definitely be supporting our house parents in their insistence that all personal documentation must be kept in a secure, fire-proof and waterproof (!) safe.

People react to these situations in very different ways. Some of the boys (and staff) were more traumatised than others and additional support and counselling has been given to those who have needed it. It is important also to remember those higher up the chain, who are shouldering the responsibility for all.

Buildings may be beautiful or historic, but they can be replaced. People cannot and we remain forever thankful that no one was hurt.

*Jeremy Gladwin is the Headmaster and Sarah Gowans is the marketing manager at Bishop's Stortford College.*

# From Convent School to College - a new dawn

Headmaster Andrew Colpus describes a journey of courage and imagination

When St Joseph's College in Reading scooped two wins at the 2015 *TES* Independent School Awards, it was a tribute to the achievements of our entire school community. The prizes for Financial/Commercial Initiative and Independent School of the Year 2015 were very welcome recognition for the work we have done to turn St Joseph's into a strong and thriving school for our students and staff.

In retrospect, however, the need for change was essential. One only had to look at a map of schools in the Reading area in 2009 to understand the problem St Joseph's faced at the time. There was stiff competition from both the independent and state sectors including a heavily oversubscribed girls' grammar school.

The second consideration that emerged in comparing St Joseph's with the other independent day schools in the area was that, while the fees of the senior school at St Joseph's were comparable to the other schools, the facilities provided were falling behind.

We decided that cutting school fees would significantly increase the appeal of the school and the governors agreed to a fee reduction of 17%, which might appear to some to be a foolhardy move. However, it was a decision that helped our school appeal to households from a wider demographic than before, and this had a very positive impact on our pupil numbers. Our catchment area did not really change a great deal, but demand for places did.

At the same time, we embarked on a major programme of investment and, while it may seem counter-intuitive to spend more money having cut our fees, it was a move that was critical to our success. This was made possible thanks to a decision by the Sisters of St Marie Madeleine Postel to grant us a long-term lease for the site. We revamped the Dining Hall, Chapel and College Hall, started work on a new Sixth Form Centre, and the school grounds had an overhaul with new landscaping. The bank released funds for the development tranche by tranche as our pupil numbers steadily began to grow. →



*Andrew Colpus and pupils.*



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The school made one other big change too. St Joseph's had been a girls' school since its foundation, but in 2010 the school became fully co-educational from three to 18. Although there were many independent schools in the Reading area, few were co-educational and so we now offered a new option to families who wanted to be able to send both sons and daughters to the same school.

Parents were a key part of the process and they helped us understand which additional features would make the school more attractive to a wider number of families. Their feedback told us that many families have both parents at work for long hours, so introducing extended care until 6pm meant that they could pick their child up without arranging separate childcare. Likewise, increasing bus routes, providing holiday clubs and adding a new Early Years Centre also increased interest.

As pupil numbers began to grow, we needed to support a wider variety of pupil needs. Our entrance assessment ensured a strong cohort of pupils, but with all the changes we simply had more pupils to take care of. During the transition, we also had boys joining in all year groups, rather than the traditional entry points of Early Years and Year 7. Both these changes meant we needed to keep a closer eye on pupils to ensure that we were spotting any gaps in learning and challenging all students in line with their abilities.

So that we could track this accurately, we began to use pupil data more. We increased the use of our SIMS Independent management information system. Staff from across the school

record data to track their pupils' attainment and to spot if a pupil starts to fall behind so that this can be addressed.

Direct access to the data means teaching and pastoral staff can sit down with the pupils and have a conversation about their progress in each subject, demonstrating how they are progressing compared to previous years or against their classmates. The same data can be shared with parents to show them how much their child is benefiting from their time at our school.

Understandably, some of our families were a little apprehensive about these radical changes at first, but we have been able to allay those concerns with regular communication. The pay-off for me was when the parent of one of our pupils, who had been at the school for a number of years, told me how she had been opposed to the changes at the beginning, but that we had demonstrated that the school is now better than ever. Her fears had been entirely unfounded.

Our male-female split is now almost equal and our pupil numbers have risen from just over 300 in 2010 to nearly 500 this year. The signs are that this trend will continue, but we know our journey is far from over. The process has taught me that if you have the confidence to do something innovative – even in a traditional sector like ours – you could secure the future of your students and your school.

*Andrew Colpus became Headmaster of St Joseph's College, Reading in September 2012 after seven years at Reading Blue Coat School, where he was Second Master.*

## HERE & THERE

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

### St Swithun's pupil designs key to supersonic car

Amy Dennison, a Year 10 pupil from St Swithun's School, Winchester, is the winner of a British Army led competition to design the key for the Bloodhound SSC project.

The project is aimed at designing a supersonic car that will break the current land speed record, set by Briton Andy Green in 1997. Amy got involved with the scheme after seeing the competition in the *First News* newspaper for young people.

Explaining her winning key design, Amy said: "I really wanted it to be a nice smooth shape with a place where it was easy to hold, so I created the thumb-hole. In the desert racing the car it's going to be hot, so it's going to help to grip on to it. There are all kinds of things you have to fit in with the design of the actual car itself, and how it's going to fit in when it's being used."

The competition was organised by the British Army's team of REME engineers working on the Bloodhound project, as part of their campaign to engage with the engineers of the future.

Amy, who plans a career in prosthetic engineering when she leaves school, received a VIP tour of the Bloodhound factory as one of her winner's prizes, looking around the car itself and seeing her design made into the official metal key by Corporal Liz Brown, an armourer in the REME and the key project lead.



*Amy with Corporal Liz Brown (photograph courtesy REME).*

# How to get results

Hugh Wright reflects on changing teaching methods

The way the young are spoken to about their school work has changed a lot from what was customary in the past. Affirmation and praise seem now to be the constant keynotes rather than pointing out the faults. Have things gone too far?

I was much struck recently when hearing interviews given by the great Cuban ballet dancer, Carlos Acosta, about to retire from his position as Principal Guest Artist at Covent Garden, and by Ramona de Saa, one of his teachers at the Ballet school he attended in Cuba as a teenager – like him a legend in her own time.

He recalled that all she ever said after watching him dance was, “All right”. If he had made a mistake, however small, she just looked at him without a word as he left the class. At the end of his time there she entered him for the Prix de Lausanne, one of the leading ballet competitions in the world. He won it. Looking back she said of him, “He had a talent which was beyond talent.” Two things emerge. He respected her absolutely because he knew she knew all about what he was doing; and on her side she was not overawed by the best pupil she had ever had and knew how to get the best out of him. There is no one right way and hers would not do for most people!

Alec Dakin, who taught me Latin at school, was very different. He never spoke of it, but he was fresh from Hut 6 at Bletchley Park in the war, where he was, we subsequently learned, one of the innermost circle. I discovered at Oxford he had done research after the war in Egyptology at my college. He never referred to either of these earlier experiences.

He had our absolute respect, despite his almost pathological modesty, because he knew so much and cared so much. Nearly always late for lessons, he loved to recite Virgil – he knew most of *The Aeneid* by heart. I do not recall his ever actually teaching us anything in detail, but he was so visibly upset if you made a mistake that you did your best to avoid disappointing him.

I also recall Peter Bridle, surely one of the best music masters of his generation, from my time as Chief Master at King Edward’s Birmingham. He conducted the orchestra which was made up of girls from King Edward’s High School next door and the boys from KES. This orchestra had come from nowhere, when he was appointed in Robson Fisher’s time, to producing the most members of the National Youth Orchestra from any school.

Before I had learned how good it was, I volunteered to play my bassoon in it in the School Concert in the Adrian Boult Hall at Christmas at the end of my first term. I particularly remember one rehearsal. There was a difficult phrase and both the girl from KEHS who was first bassoon and I, who was



*Hugh Wright.*

number three or four, got it slightly wrong (a matter of not phrasing it smoothly across the join, fellow sufferers on the bassoon will know what I mean).

It was in a passage for full orchestra in, I think, a Tchaikovsky symphony. He stopped everyone and asked what our problem was. We tried to explain. He listened and made little comment. The point was that he had noticed, he knew what he wanted and he wasn’t going to accept less. This was not negotiable. The best are all like that.

The common themes seem to be knowing, caring and having very high standards. There must be an infinite number of ways of showing these. As they advance, pupils increasingly often know themselves when they have not done well or, especially, not tried as hard as they could. They wait to see if their teacher has realised. If yes, respect is born: if no, it makes it easier to coast next time.

If also they think they have done well when they have not, this must be said, and said in a way that will help. It is bound to come out sooner or later anyway. I recall spending a morning in the history department at Stockport Grammar School after I had been Head there for a few years. It was a really good department that now boasts, amongst its alumni, a number of professors of history, including one at Harvard.

The head of department, Nick Henshall, was outstanding, another legend in his own time. At the end of the morning I needed to say what I thought of the teaching I had seen and the content *etc.* I mentioned what I saw as the faults. He said he was doing his best to put them right and that I had given him more incentive and greater confidence to do so. If I had not pointed them out, the morning would have been enjoyable but, essentially, a waste of time.

There is an infinite number of ways of teaching of course in every subject, starting with Socrates who kept on asking

questions because he professed not to know the answers and only gave his views with hesitation. We only know about him from his pupils. The masters who taught the remarkable products of Gresham's School Holt in the 1920s and 30s, which included W H Auden, Benjamin Britten and many others of extraordinary originality in diverse fields, seem to have had only one thing in common: allowing their pupils a lot of personal freedom.

This was the policy of the school then and all accepted it. Those teaching there were not always respected, some far from it. Britten, for instance, could not stand the head of music, a man that Auden admired, but the boys there seemed to have taught each other in the long periods of time, compared with now, when they were able to do what they

liked. The labs were always open in the evenings for them to do their own experiments. This was, of course, before A levels were invented!

Some way or another, love of learning needs to be handed on and standards of scholarship need to be set, with all those involved enjoying the process and achieving all they can. However – *tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis*. Ways of doing things must change, so there comes a point where you just have to let go and watch, but we can all remember those who did it for us and it was not just by saying well done.

*Hugh Wright read classics as a Bible Clerk at The Queen's College, Oxford, and was Chairman of HMC in 1995.*

# Great teaching

Kris Spencer uses a Sutton Trust report to get teachers talking about inspiring their pupils

In October 2014, The Sutton Trust Group published their report, *What Makes Great Teaching?* The report reviewed over 200 pieces of research and came up with a rank of six components which support great teaching:

1. Deep subject knowledge.
2. Quality of instruction – effective questioning, use of assessment, scaffolding.
3. Classroom climate – constantly demanding but recognising a student's self-worth; valuing resilience and effort rather than ability.
4. Classroom management.
5. Teacher beliefs – theories of learning and models of the role of teaching.
6. Professional behaviours – good practice, professional development, supporting colleagues and liaising with parents.

This list of key components of great teaching is an attractive one, not least because it seems to cut through jargon and faddishness. Interested in exploring the list in the context of independent schools, I asked some of my colleagues the following questions:

Do you agree with the order? What would you add to the list? What is great teaching? What is your advice when teaching is not going well?

The answers, summarized below, are wise and fascinating in their diversity, and left me heartened as to the future of our pupils and for teaching as a profession.

## Do you agree with the order?

In the Sutton Trust list the order is very important with content knowledge and quality of instruction showing *strong evidence* of impact on student outcomes, whereas teacher beliefs and professional behaviours show only *some evidence*



*Kris Spencer.*

on outcomes. My colleagues agreed with the list, for the most part, but there was some difference when it came to the order. Many thought that professional behaviours, although important, belonged on another list:

I agree that the first five are all key components, although number six is an anomaly because it is external – the others are all subjective to the individual. Of course, I am in favour of professional development, but I think progress is about being open to ideas and people, all the time. The first five are key characteristics, the sixth is an outside good delivered to the professional.

Others saw the rank itself as more dynamic. This response typifies the view that great teaching involves a holistic take on things:

*Continued overleaf* →

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Executive Head Chef



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The best subject knowledge in the world collapses without classroom management. Conversely, brilliant classroom climate or beliefs could negate a teacher's lack of the deepest subject knowledge. In addition, the order may shift depending on context: deep subject knowledge is more important at an academically selective independent school.

And some wanted to flip the list:

I would put component 5 at the top – I am a strong believer in 'what makes the teacher tick' has a big impact in any classroom – and I would have a deep subject knowledge (1) at the bottom. This is obviously important, but I'm with Einstein when he says: 'If you can't explain it simply, you don't really understand it.' I think delivery and rapport are more important than the depth and breadth of my subject knowledge, though that helps!

### What would you add to the list?

For the most part, there was agreement that content knowledge, at the top of the Sutton Trust's list, was a necessary but not sufficient element of great teaching. Many teachers recognised that there was a higher level than this, based on an approach that captures the continued excitement and open-mindedness to new ideas that is so central to those who are truly passionate about teaching their subject:

I would put a greater emphasis on terms like 'inspirational', 'motivating', 'love for their subject', and 'engaging', since 'deep subject knowledge' on its own doesn't make a good teacher or necessarily lead to good lessons. The teacher must make their subject knowledge accessible, relevant and interesting. Learning should be a two-way process with the teacher stimulating discussion and critical thinking.

The need for dialogue and understanding between teacher and pupils was also something which colleagues felt should be championed, and many felt that the pastoral side of teaching seems to be underplayed in the list:

Empathy is key. I don't mean just empathy for a dyslexic pupil, or a pupil from a minority, or a pupil who finds it hard to speak up in class. I mean the sort of empathy that you learn from experience of what is going to go through a pupil's mind.

The most important part of a teacher's day is stopping to listen to a student, or sending them a message they weren't expecting to have, or congratulating them off-guard in an informal moment.

These moments can be more seminal than any course or series of lessons, or even reports.

For some, the list lacked a clear description of the attributes of great teachers:

What is missing from the list is what the students want from a teacher – someone firm but fair, approachable, energetic, funny and, especially, encouraging.

Many saw an openness but also a certain restlessness as important elements in great teaching:

I believe that enthusiasm, time for self-reflection and the open-mindedness to be inspired or change are important. The day a teacher says that they have mastered their craft is a sad one.

We have to be constantly updating what we do and striving to find a balance of what is fundamental and what is desirable.

### What is great teaching?

Looking beyond the list, I asked for my colleagues' views on what makes for great and inspirational teaching, and what teachers should be aiming to do. It is no surprise that this question harvested some particularly rich responses. For some, it was about inspiration and perspiration:

It's about engineering those 'lightbulb' moments that arise from challenging thinking; and then making sure pupils are confident in what they have learnt which arises from hard work on their part and assessment and feedback from the teacher – which all depends on the things on the Sutton Trust list being in place.

For many the best teaching was about lighting fires which were self-sustaining:

Creating an environment in which students are confident to be able to 'fall forward'. It should start by being student-based, and should encourage student ownership and participation. It should also encourage students to question, to challenge. To essentially want to stay behind after lessons and continue discussing what they have been doing for the last hour.

An important take on great teaching that emerged was the feeling that the best teaching was not just about the charisma of a teacher but rather about fostering a love of learning and the key skills of the subject, regardless of the personality of the teacher. One colleague felt particularly strongly about this cult of personality:

I'm slightly suspicious of the 'inspirational' teaching model portrayed by Robin Williams in the film *Dead Poets Society*, perhaps because I think knowledge and the pursuit of it should speak for itself. I'm wary of loving a teacher over the subject, because what happens to that love when the teacher goes? In that sense I guess I would want the best teaching to place knowledge and students' reactions and encounters with it at the heart of things.

### What to do when things go wrong?

Even the very best teachers have times when things don't spark. I asked my colleagues for their advice on how to address things when teaching is not going as well as it could be, for whatever reason. For many the advice is to go back to basics:

Be honest with yourself but don't beat yourself up! Do simple things to gain confidence – mark easy things more frequently and plan lessons whereby the pupils have to do more and you do less. Change the way you introduce tasks without necessarily making the task different or easier. Change the seating plan. Prioritise the important things – assessment and sensible planning based on what the pupils have done. Don't spend hours making resources.

Teachers also felt the need to appreciate that there is such a thing as a group dynamic, and that misjudging this can cause problems:

*Continued overleaf* 

## Teaching

Different groups learn in different ways. This can be hard to appreciate early on, especially if a lesson worked brilliantly the year before with a different group. Think about sequencing of lessons more carefully. Very often it is a case of bridging ideas or reviewing previous lessons – giving the pupils a sense that everything is connected in one huge tapestry. They then find it exciting – like a good TV series, you just can't miss an episode even if you can't see the point of it at the time!

And there is also a need to take things on the chin, from time to time:

Some will disagree with me on this, but never blame the pupils. If you blame the pupils then you end up thinking you can't do anything about it, and that is just not so. It is under your control. What I would certainly say is, if something isn't working, don't try the same thing again expecting a different result.

One teacher suggests an approach which we might also associate with great athletes:

For me, visioning is a great exercise – imagining your perfect lesson in the perfect environment. This helps to inspire and it helps if things go wrong, as they do and, perhaps, as they should. That can be shared learning, and being honest with students can increase respect. We can't 'spark' every day and students know that. But make sure they recognise when you're on fire!

When things are not chiming, the best teachers speak to their classes and get them involved:

When it's not working out, try being honest and open with your classes. Saying to a group of kids or an individual that something is not going the way you wanted or planned is powerful. For them to see your fallibility is good. I don't think anyone expects perfection.

It is clear that the very best teachers never battle something on their own, but speak to other people:

When things are not going well, I self-evaluate where things have gone wrong. I then discuss the things with colleagues to seek advice and a fresh perspective. I don't think any teacher should be above this. I suppose I see a bad lesson as an opportunity to improve my own pedagogy. Observation of colleagues is also very useful here.

### Great teaching and great teachers

What emerged from my conversations with my colleagues is just how good teachers are at talking about teaching. Great teachers are clearly generous and open in sharing what they do, and how and why they do it. It is clear that there is no single approach to great teaching.

Rather, great teaching depends on beliefs and values which put the child and the subject at the centre of teaching. It depends on the qualities of enthusiasm, warmth and sense of humour in addition to kindness, openness and empathy. In their actions, the best teachers model and communicate an excitement about their subject, and they never forget the basics of good planning and regular feedback in and out of lessons.

The Sutton Trust have provided us with a list which, if not the essence of great teaching, might well be the framework upon which great teaching can be built and celebrated.

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

Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., and Elliot Major, Lee (2014). What makes great teaching? Review of underpinning research *The Sutton Trust* can be downloaded at <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf>

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*'For the most part, there was agreement that content knowledge, at the top of the Sutton Trust's list, was a necessary but not sufficient element of great teaching. Many teachers recognised that there was a higher level than this, based on an approach that captures the continued excitement and open-mindedness to new ideas that is so central to those who are truly passionate about teaching their subject'*

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# UCAS – Universal Chasing After Statements

O R Houseman tries not to get too personal

Just before the end of the Michaelmas Term I completed what I thought was the final UCAS reference of the season. Not for the first time, I had been asked to produce this reference on the last Monday of term by a boy who had always insisted that he would only be applying to American universities and would not require a UCAS reference.

Then he changed his mind, and thought he would “have a go anyway”. An hour after the conversation with the boy, his mother wrote to ask whether I had submitted his application yet; she reminded me that it was important to send it off as quickly as possible if he was not to be disadvantaged.

As I prepared for the shock of the start of the Lent Term, I consoled myself with the thought that at least the UCAS process was over for another year. This was a foolish mistake: on the last day of the Christmas holidays a boy who left two years ago wrote to say that he was not enjoying the course he had started after his gap year, had dropped out and was reapplying through UCAS. So would I please write his reference? Helpfully he reminded me that we were very close to the January deadline, and that I should let him and his father know as soon as I had submitted the reference.

Is there any other task which takes up an amount of time so disproportionate to its genuine value? Increasingly, university admissions tutors seem to be admitting that they spend little time reading Personal Statements or indeed references. They know that the Personal Statement of a pupil at a Public School has not been written by that pupil. Every reference tells them that this candidate is the most serious scholar to have applied to their university for some time (at least, the most serious since the last candidate from this school), so there really is no need to spend any time reading the reference.

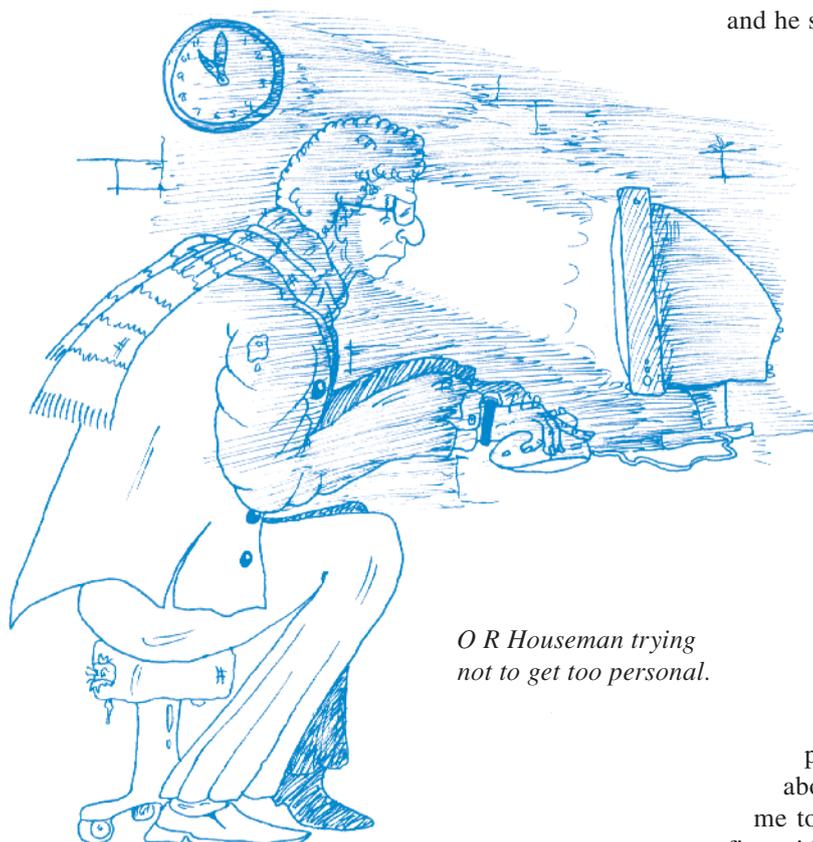
The admissions tutors also know that the parents and the pupil saw the reference before it was submitted: the parents of the pupil for whom the glowing reference is full of lies, certainly insisted on reading it. Does the process therefore really justify the amount of time we spend on it? It could be so simple, and completed so quickly.

However, this seems to be the only occasion on which the schoolboy defies advice to do less. Sixth formers become so anxious about the Personal Statement that they spend far more time on this than they do revising the work for the A levels they need in order to get their university place. The schoolboy wants to believe that he can write a perfect Personal Statement, that he can find a magic formula which will earn him his offer, and he spends more time trying to perfect this than he spends on any of his studies.

He writes draft after draft, he uses language and tired clichés, which he would never use in speech or even normal essay writing, in an attempt to sound maturely erudite. He claims to have been ‘passionate’ about his course ‘since an early age’, and, because he has heard that the Personal Statement should show evidence of independent learning, and that references to extra-curricular activities should be analysed in a way which makes them relevant to university study, he says that his coursework has made him an independent learner and that playing for the 4th XV has taught him crucial skills in teamwork and leadership.

He then tells the admissions tutor to whom this is addressed, that these are the attributes which make a good undergraduate. He does not talk about the content of his coursework or say what he has learned about leadership.

Three years ago I was presented with a perfect example of the UCAS ordeal. A rather under-motivated son of a highly ambitious mother eventually produced a tedious and meaningless piece of prose about his passion for finance and accounting and asked me to look at it. Of course, I should have told him it was fine without even looking, as no admissions tutor would waste



*O R Houseman trying not to get too personal.*

## Teaching

his time in this way, but when I saw the opening paragraph I could not resist an instinct to correct a schoolboy's mistakes.

I spent an hour with him rewriting it. He seemed grateful. Two days later he asked me to check what he called his final draft. I looked at the first paragraph and noticed that he had made none of the corrections I had suggested. When I pointed this out, he said that he had also asked his economics teacher, who had said he liked the first paragraph, so decided to keep it.

"Why are you asking me again, in fact, why did you ask me in the first place, if you were not going to listen to my advice?"

"I did listen to your advice, but I thought it would be useful to get another opinion as well."

"This is supposed to be a Personal Statement. If you show it to different people they will all have different opinions. If you try following the advice of everyone who has seen it, your so-called Personal Statement will be inconsistent and incoherent. And it certainly will not be personal. Do not show it to anybody else. Just write it."

That was the end of the conversation for that day. During the course of the week he showed it to two more teachers, and again to me. I tried to forget all about it but at the end of the week I knew I had to return to the subject.

"Have you now uploaded your Personal Statement into the UCAS website?"

"Not yet."

"Why not? It is now finished, isn't it?"

"My mother is looking at it."

Of course.

"Is she a university admissions tutor?"

"No. But my cousin went to Cambridge and she is asking him to look at it."

"Is he a university admissions tutor?"

"No."

"Does he work in a school? Is he employed to guide people through UCAS applications? Has he been doing that for the last 20 years?"

"No. But he did get into Cambridge so must have written a very good Personal Statement."

"Fine. Do whatever he tells you and put it in."

"Don't you want to see it first?"

"I have seen it, I have told you it is finished, but you clearly think your cousin knows more than I do so no, I am not going to look at it again."

I could see that the boy recognised he had annoyed me, but I was not convinced that he understood why. Another boy came into the study. I tried to find an ally.

"If you were feeling really ill, would you go to a doctor, or somebody else who had been ill recently?"

"I think I would probably go to a doctor."

"Wise."

They both laughed. I thought I was winning.

"And if you wanted advice about a university application, would you go to somebody who is employed to give advice about university applications, or to an undergraduate?"

"An undergraduate."

At least he was honest. This case continued in typical fashion. The next day the boy came into my study and asked whether I had written his reference yet. I told him that I had only just finished writing his Personal Statement so no, I had not yet written his reference. If he saw the humour in this he did not show it.

Instead he began to try to suggest that I was jeopardising his chances, that the school had told them to get their applications in early because universities are more likely to make an offer to early applications. He had chosen to hear this piece of advice, though he had not heard my advice about how to write his statement. My reply made my impatience fairly plain. I knew I would hear from his mother soon. She called that evening.

The conversation was not too problematic at first. I frequently remind colleagues that the UCAS procedure is so convoluted and counter-intuitive that few parents have any idea at all how it works. A phone call which begins as a complaint can easily be turned into an explanatory and non-confrontational conversation by simply explaining the UCAS procedures. However, it can only remain this way until the question of predicted grades arises.

"He tells me that his Chemistry teacher has said he will only predict him a B."

I knew why: the boy's work had been so poor that he had produced nothing better than a grade C. I had had to work quite hard to persuade the chemistry teacher to take this up to a B. He said he thought that was dishonest and corrupt. I told him he was right. I now had to try to support my teaching colleague while placating the increasingly indignant and decreasingly logical mother.

"Well, his work recently has been consistently of C grade quality. We have not seen the evidence to suggest he has the potential to improve to an A, and that is why his teacher has said he can only predict a B."

"If he is only predicted a B he will not get an offer from Bristol."

"Perhaps he should be looking at a range of universities which make offers to pupils predicted a B grade?"

"He wants to go to Bristol, so he needs an A."

"That is correct. He will need an A to get into Bristol."

"To get an offer he needs to be predicted an A."

"Indeed. But our teachers have to be honest when making predictions. They must have evidence for it. Our references lose credibility if we make predictions which are then not matched."

"I know he will get an A."

"Good. Unfortunately his teacher has seen no evidence of that and so cannot honestly make that prediction."

"I will not allow that application to be sent until it predicts him three As."

I predicted an A grade. He got a B. Bristol accepted him anyway. At the beginning of last term the same boy wrote to me. After a short introduction in which he told me how much he was enjoying Bristol (though he had changed course because he was not enjoying that very much), and in which he said he hoped all was well in the house, he came to his point. His younger brother, who was at another school, was about to begin his UCAS application. He and his parents wondered, as I had been so helpful with his application, whether I would be able to take a look at his younger brother's Personal Statement.

I have not yet replied.

*O R Houseman has a surprisingly slow-burning fuse.*

# 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.

## Putney H S's new boathouse

In a bold stroke, GDST and Putney High School have acquired a Tideway boathouse on a prime Boat Race site, which was opened earlier this year by the chairman of British Rowing, Annamarie Phelps CBE. She was joined by another member of the squad that represented Great Britain at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Mrs Suzie Longstaff, who is now Putney High School's Headmistress.

Mrs Longstaff also competed on the Tideway, coxing the Goldie boat in the races of 1997 and 1998, so she knows what a challenging and rewarding experience it is rowing from a Putney boathouse. With the Boat Race start right in front of them, GDST girls will have an annual opportunity to see what top-level sport demands and the dedication that goes into being the best in any sphere.

Women's rowing is one of British sport's greatest success stories in recent years. Amongst those at the forefront of this surge was the 1997 eight coxed by Suzie Longstaff that won bronze for the first time at the World Championships. The arrival of an all-female boathouse on the course of the most famous rowing race in the world will inspire and enable the next generation.

Putney High School girls are already off the mark, coming second in their category in the Schools' Head of the River Race in March.



# Books or eBooks? That's the question

Stephen Burley contemplates Shakespeare  
and the digitized curriculum

Mobile technology has well and truly arrived. A recent study found that tablets are being used to some extent in 69% of UK secondary schools, with 9% using tablets on a 1:1 basis. Of the schools that aren't using tablet technology, 45% reported that they planned to do so in the coming years.

The body of research on the impact of tablets in education is undeniably positive. Studies have found the benefits to include improved student motivation, enhanced personalised learning, greater skills of independence and autonomy, higher quality collaborative work, heightened research skills, and 'anytime, anywhere learning'.

The greatest impacts have been seen with regard to students with SEND, and in schools where tablets are used on a 1:1 basis. One study has found that the use of mobile technology is beginning to precipitate a transition away from teacher-directed learning, as students develop a greater sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning and engage in more productive forms of collaborative work.

Certainly, more research is required, and on a more extensive basis, to fully assess the impact on tablets. Little is known, for example, about the impact on student attainment, and concerns have been raised about internet addiction, cyberbullying and the distractions of social media. Classroom management software will offer a solution to these issues during lesson time, whilst well designed and implemented whole-school policies alongside the careful management of tablet use in schools should mitigate these potential difficulties.

However, teachers' perceptions of the new technology are perhaps the greatest challenge. To use Mark Prensky's terminology, it can be extremely daunting for the 'digital immigrants' at the front of the classroom to embrace mobile technology in order to teach the 'digital natives' sitting behind the desks – something of a case of the novices leading the experts! Plenty of time, patience and in-house training with the sharing of good practice are the only ways to improve teachers' perceptions and develop confidence and knowledge in using the new devices. This is a slow and gradual process.

Despite the challenges, the overall panorama is encouraging. The findings of one study in 2012 capture the exciting sense of possibility opened up by tablet technology:

This project demonstrates that technology-rich environments, with personal devices for all students tailored to their preferences, and the freedom for every child to discover and develop and own her learning is a powerfully effective model for the future of education.

(Bjerede & Bondi 2012)



*Stephen Burley.*

This future, it seems, is neither one in which the role of the teacher will be undermined, nor one in which tablet technology dominates at the expense of tried and tested best practice in the classroom. Rather, it's a future in which students are enabled to develop confidence, independence, and a sense of 'ownership' of their work through carefully personalised and customised learning and the judicious use of tablets to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

One important impact of the digital revolution in education is the question that now surrounds the future of printed texts and textbooks. The rapidly expanding range of interactive digital books and apps that promise to transform learning experience is beginning to challenge the traditional role and status of the textbook in the classroom. As schools look at ways to re-imagine the curriculum to incorporate digital learning, it's worth examining the issues surrounding hard copy text versus eBook.

Clearly, there are a number of practical and economic advantages to eBooks and apps. eBooks, when bought via Apple's Volume Purchase Program, tend to be significantly cheaper than their hard copy equivalents; eBooks are updated automatically and without cost whereas hard copies quickly go out of date; students no longer need to carry a selection of weighty tomes to get them through to lunchtime; nor do they require the space to store them in and out of school; and the reduction in the use of paper for printing has obvious environmental benefits.

But what are the educational benefits of eBooks and apps in terms of teaching and learning, and will they promote academic rigour and deep understanding? As head of English at Headington School, these are questions that I've been exploring as I look at ways of integrating digital learning within our English curriculum. I've started with Shakespeare because of his centrality within the curriculum and the fact that, unsurprisingly, there is a greater range of eBooks and apps on Shakespeare than on any other author.

There are plenty of options currently available on both iOS and Android platforms. Folger Luminary, Cambridge Explore, Shakespeare at Play, and Shakespeariance offer eBooks and apps of key Shakespeare plays with a range of interactive and multi-modal features, including photos, video and audio

recordings, as well as illuminating commentaries by actors, directors and academics. These products endeavour to bring the text of the play to life, developing appreciation of the plays in performance whilst supporting close analysis of the text.

Some of new eBooks and apps use videos to support the reading and understanding of the text, with either clips of individual scenes or complete performances. To my mind, however, there's an important distinction between video materials that are used merely to illustrate the text, often featuring bespoke performances of variable quality without audience or performance context, and videos that both illustrate the performance possibilities of the text and encourage critical and evaluative thinking with regard to different performative options and choices.

On this note, it's perhaps no surprise that the Globe and the RSC have led the way in creating the best new digital resources for Shakespeare. (Will the National Theatre follow suit? I hope so.) The Globe Education Shakespeare eBooks are the current market leaders. Working with the publishers Hodder, the Globe team has produced four superb editions, packed with multi-modal features: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. The strength of the series lies both in the textual apparatus, for the linguistic study of the play, and the range of interactive features, especially the quality of the audio and visual resources.

If we take Act 1 Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet* as an example, we begin to get a sense of what they offer. Students can explore the co-created sonnet and then watch Globe actors, Claire Lams as Juliet, and Chiké Okonkwo as Romeo, rehearse the scene and discuss performance ideas with the director, Bill Buckhurst. Students can then watch a clip of the scene in performance at the Globe, with Ellie Hendrick as Juliet and Adetomiwa Edun as Romeo, comparing and evaluating the rehearsal and performance scenes.

In addition, they can listen to the views and insights of directors and actors, and generate class discussion in response to these ideas. Director's notes for each scene offer succinct and helpful summaries, whilst 'Rehearsal Room' exercises and 'Shakespeare's World' cards offer insight to performance ideas and important contexts.

In Act 1 Scene 5 alone, students can access five video clips, four audio recordings of illuminating insights from directors and actors, six production photos with accompanying tasks, two 'Rehearsal Room' activities where students perform, read, discuss and evaluate a working cut of the text for experiment, and an insightful 'Shakespeare's World' context card on Elizabethan masques. A distraction from the text, some might ask. No – many of the best features promote and support close textual analysis.

To support understanding of language and enhance close analysis, the one-tap glossary of words and phrases is extremely comprehensive and helpful, supporting students as they negotiate the complexities of Shakespeare's language. The textual apparatus allows students to highlight, annotate, search and access definitions of every word in the play. This is a far cry from the limited glossaries in many hard copy editions.

In addition, the Globe team has also produced a fantastic new app called 'Shakespeare's Globe 360' (see *Conference & Common Room*, Autumn 2015, p. 33). This gives students a 360° virtual tour of the Bankside theatre, with expert commentary and a range of other features. In this new virtual world, students can

stand on the stage of the Globe Theatre and look out to the Yard, or visit the Musician's Gallery to get a different perspective, whilst learning about the history and unique performance contexts of Shakespeare's open-air theatre.

The 'Staging It' feature (available both via the app and from the Globe's webpage) is superb. This enables students to direct a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Much Ado* on the stage at the Globe with Globe actors, using interactive film-making technology to create their own bespoke versions of key scenes from the plays.

Each line of the scene or speech has been shot four times, each time performed in a different way. Students evaluate the four shots and then make their own directorial decision as to the most appropriate, building a dynamic storyboard of shots that is then transformed into a highly professional product which can be shared with their peers to generate discussion.

The RSC's 'RE:Shakespeare app' on *Much Ado* (available on Android but not on iOS) also uses the 360° virtual feature and a range of gaming mechanics, to produce by far the most interactive Shakespeare app on the market. Hosted by David Tennant alongside an array of rap and spoken word artists, the app allows students to perform a section of *Much Ado* in first person with an RSC actor.

But the performative finale is only one aspect of the app, which is based on the idea of learning through play. It brings together popular culture and performing arts to enable students to lip sync lines with street poet Indigo before working with RSC actor Tamsin Greig and director Iqbal Khan to focus on Shakespeare's language.

At Headington, as we move towards 1:1 iPad use in 2016, we've restructured our KS3 and KS4 English curriculum to enable teachers and students to make the most of these exciting new resources. We teach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Y7, *Macbeth* in Y8, *Much Ado About Nothing* in Y9, and *Romeo and Juliet* at IGCSE using the new Globe eBooks. In addition to the Shakespeare-specific eBooks and apps, we'll be working with a range of other apps to support student learning. For example, 'Book Creator' enables students to create their own eBooks on themes, characters and key scenes, uploading audio and visual recordings of scenes they've performed or speeches they've explored, which can then be shared with their peers and their teacher.

It's still very early days in the genesis of this new genre of the eBook/app, yet there can be little doubt that what's currently available, certainly for Shakespeare teaching, offers schools much to think about. However, there's a long way to go to persuade some teachers of the benefits of a digital future in education, and to train and support those teachers as they begin to grapple with the new technology.

For some, tablet screens will always conjure up ideas of the passive and mind-numbing consumption of technology, alongside the dangers of social media. Nevertheless, I'm confident that over time more and more teachers will embrace the creative possibilities of the new technology. It's not a case of 'out with the old, in with the new'. It goes without saying that the best classroom practice will always be founded on inspirational teaching and exceptional subject knowledge, yet there's no reason at all why such teaching cannot be supported and enhanced through the intelligent use of tablet technology.

*Stephen Burley is head of English at Headington School.*

# Let's shake the darling buds of May

John Weiner sees a land of opportunity at the end of the line

So the linear age is back, at least for some subjects, anyway. Although the poor mathematicians will still be modelling in modules for a little while longer, most other subjects will have gone back to the future and be teaching or about to embark on a two year course with exams at the end.

This has been a cause for celebration amongst many independent school education professionals, with misty-eyed reminiscences of the days when you could wander off syllabus at will in order to enrich the young minds in front of you and teaching was about learning not exams.

There are of course many other advantages, such as the removal of the tactical resit to bump up those UMS scores and the associated risk of exam fatigue now being a thing of the past. However, there is one area of impact that has seen relatively little press so far ... *the post AS period* ... words that are enough to strike fear into the hearts of even the most dedicated of teachers!

Let's be fair: in the bad old days of modular courses, this period was always a little bit of a balancing act. You had classes of pupils who first of all had the scent of the upcoming summer holidays in their nostrils and had just completed a full set of external exams.

Good kids, to be sure, but perhaps not quite as motivated as they were in February. Many of them were also 110% definitely definite that they were going to drop your subject (well, until the AS results came out and, *sacré bleu*, they had scored a few UMS lower somewhere else and decided that they had always loved French after all).

Others were in and out of lessons on university visits, DofE expeditions and field trips. So what to do? Some subjects cracked on with A2, running the risk of the long summer break wiping their pupils minds as effectively as a non-authorized repair clears out an iPhone these days. Others tried out wider enrichment activities and exciting trips.

Heads of sixth form stepped in with L6th programmes to kick off the UCAS process and get a bit of alcohol, drugs and sex education into them before their exposure to the summer party season. But, judging from many colleagues in different schools I have spoken to about this over the years, no one was 100% happy that their school had cracked it.

You may be wondering why I am raising this. Surely with modules almost gone, this is a relic from a bygone era that will slowly slip away and be forgotten? Perhaps – but I think that the new A levels raise the opportunity of a summer term programme that avoids many of the pitfalls of the old system, yet adds real value to our sixth formers' education. So what would it look like?

John Weiner.



First of all, allocating much of this 'extra' time to lessons is a must. Although it will require a shift in culture from teachers used to an exam-focussed system, giving breathing room throughout the course is a perfectly acceptable use for part of the time. Simply replacing the exam time with other timetabled activities will mean that teachers still have little flexibility in going beyond the core exam material, which must be their primary focus.

If we want to broaden and deepen the students' interest, we must be prepared to trust teachers to allocate some of that time effectively throughout the year. An end point of an internal mock week can retain focus, whilst still allowing for that flexibility.

Secondly, we must think beyond schools. To quote from the *The Graduate Market in 2016*, published by High Fliers Research Limited:

Nearly half [of graduate employers] stated that it was either 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely' that a graduate who'd had no previous work experience at all with any employers would be successful during their selection process and be made a job offer, irrespective of their academic achievements or the university they had attended.

It is therefore vital that we spend some of this time helping pupils to organise placements. Whilst this might not be the only work experience they undertake, the confidence that pupils gain from organising this with our support will make them more likely to be willing and able to apply successfully going forward. Building up a portfolio of different work-based experiences during their sixth form and university years will ensure that they are significantly better placed come job application time.

Thirdly, the summer term is still perfect for the wider enrichment of our sixth formers. This might be through broadening our pupils' horizons with taster courses in different areas; exposure to leadership training; or a spot focus on some of those key employability skills that not all the students get the chance to develop fully.

Things like presentational and public speaking skills are vital in many jobs, but how many times have you been to events where the person up front was unable to enthuse the audience through nerves or a lack of understanding of stagecraft? How effectively do we train our pupils in CV writing and interview techniques? Or stress management methods that will stand them in good stead over their final year at school and beyond?

It is so rare in the busy life of an independent school to be able to find space for these things, although their value is undeniable. Without the inflexibility of external exams to work around, the programme can move away from a week or two's blitz and be drip-fed throughout the term. Building development of these skills into tutor time alongside formal sessions can also help structure opportunities for pupils to try out and refine these skills, thus improving their effectiveness.

All independent schools have laudable aims and philosophies, which quite rightly espouse wider development alongside the academic progress of pupils. The new A levels offer us an opportunity to refocus on some of these core values that underpin the education we offer as our sixth formers move towards their final year, as well as giving them that little bit extra in their journeys beyond school. Let's make sure we make it count.

And no, Jimmy, I don't care how sunny it is, were not having the lesson outside today.

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

## 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.

### Top fashion and textile prizes for King's Ely

The art department at King's Ely is celebrating huge success at the National Fashion and Textiles Awards after winning three top prizes.

A Level Textiles student Jessica Nurse was awarded first prize in the prestigious competition; Mia Takehara was runner up and highly commended; and Holly Parker was commended. These impressive achievements by King's Ely students make the school the overall winner of the competition.

The highly competitive event celebrates the diverse range of fashion design produced for A level by students aged 16 to 19. This type of success also plays a major role in university applications and relevant employment.

A total of seven pieces of work out of a shortlist of 20 were designed by King's Ely students and exhibited at the Knitting and Stitching Show March 2016, held at Olympia in London where the announcement was made.

Alison Rhodes, director of art at King's Ely, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for the school and our students, considering it is a national competition with only 20 pieces shortlisted. We have had entries shortlisted every year, but this is the most to date. It's a wonderful opportunity to make links with valuable contacts such as the embroiderer Diane Bates and milliner Lauren Martin."



# Umoja Africa 2016: an adventure with purpose

Liz Dillarstone travels from the slums of Nairobi to Cape Point

In mid-January, I embarked upon an *Umoja* journey through Africa, visiting 11 projects, most of which are already supported by International Needs UK ([www.ineeds.org.uk](http://www.ineeds.org.uk)) and/or International Needs Canada ([www.internationalneeds.ca](http://www.internationalneeds.ca)), whilst travelling through Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and finishing at Cape Point in South Africa.

To experience an *Umoja* journey, participants purchase seats in a Land Rover and embark on a trip by road, sea, rail and air, through a series of planned destinations designed to reflect the *Umoja* tagline 'Adventure with Purpose'. The 'adventure' component of the journey includes visits to destinations that showcase the natural beauty of the earth. This is expertly blended with the 'purpose' component which takes participants to visit sustainable development initiatives supported by International Needs (IN).

The journey is designed to engage and inspire participants from around the world to embrace the idea of unity that is reflected in *Umoja* and to see themselves not just as members of exclusive isolated communities of narrow interests, but as committed citizens of an intimately interconnected world. The concept of the *Umoja* (meaning 'unity' in Swahili) journey appealed to me on a number of levels.

The variety, social impact and travelling with a team of like-minded 'umojees' were key factors. Being given the

opportunity to 'make a difference' and invest my time and gifts whilst embracing the spectacular scenery, cultures and wildlife that Africa offers was a huge draw. The *Umoja* journey is about finding significance and living rather than just leaving a legacy!

Straight off the plane, my journey (with CEO of IN Canada David Marshall, Oundle maths teacher Nicola Guise and Canadian 'umojee' Colleen Cole) began in Nairobi with a visit to Lighthouse Ministries, an alcohol and drug rehabilitation programme in Limuru which empowers local partners to be pro-active on issues of drug and substance abuse.

They train youth and children workers to recognise those struggling with drug addiction, with strategies implemented to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into the community. We met a young man called Shammath who had not only turned his life around with the help of this team, but was now introducing others who were in a similar situation.

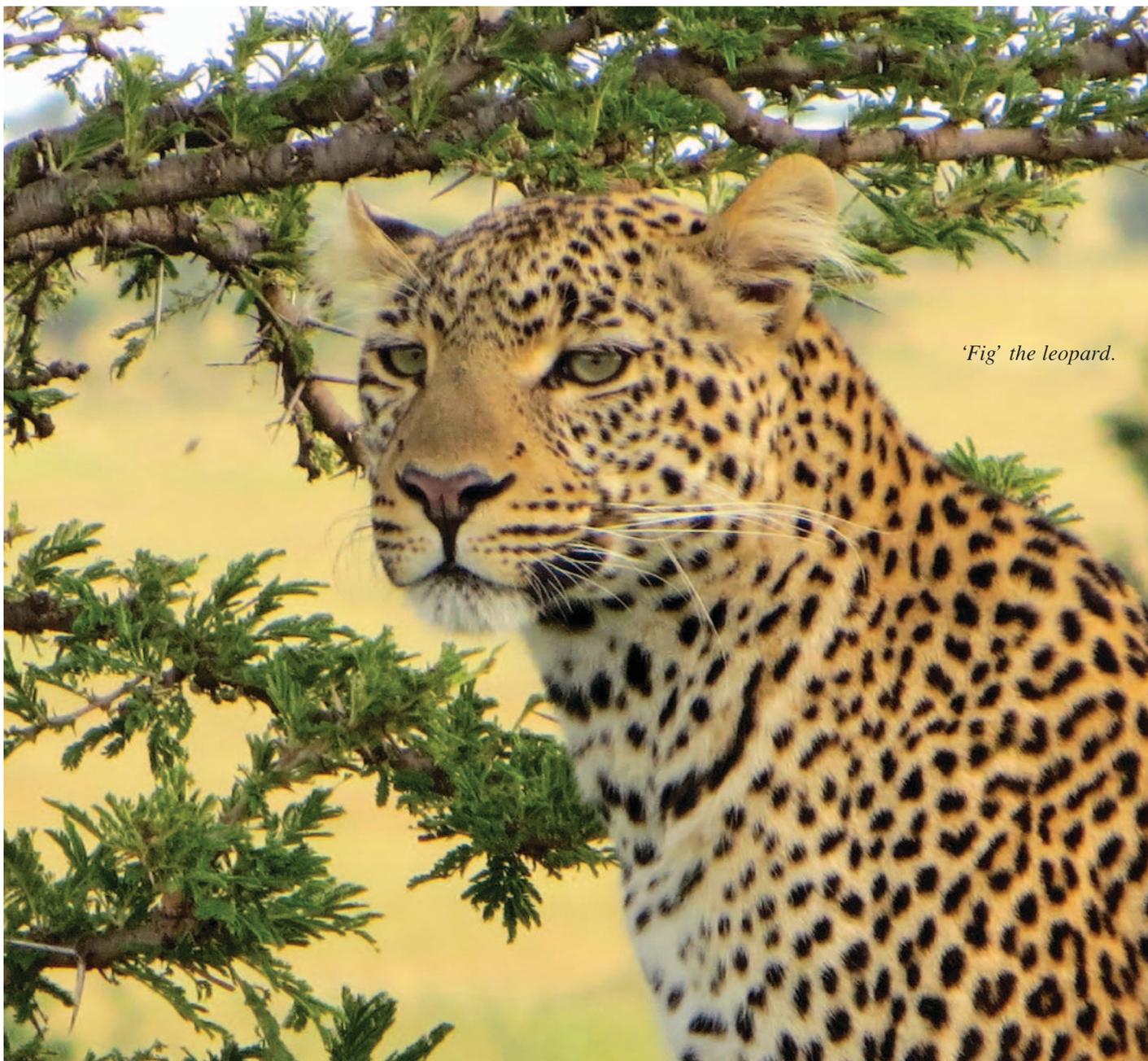
From there we travelled by Land Rover through the Rift Valley up to Gilgil, spending two nights at Malewa Bush Camp and visiting the children at Gilgil Special School who are supported by a UK charity, the Kivuli Trust ([www.kivulitrust.org](http://www.kivulitrust.org)), with whom Oundle School already has close links. The Kivuli Trust provides hostels set up to support children with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

The trust helps over 100 once 'forgotten' children to access an education at Gilgil Special School, which is located in the grounds of the local township school. As well as equipping these vulnerable children with skills for life, the interaction with other children seeks to encourage understanding and acceptance in the community. In advance of the trip, I had collected 'odd' socks from family and friends and travelled out with over 250 socks used to make sock puppets with the children. I also met up with my sponsored children and it was a privilege to laugh and share in their lives.

From Gilgil, we enjoyed three nights of game drives in the Mara with our guide Betty. She is the first female Maasai guide and she has a special gift for tracking leopard which enabled the group to see 'Fig' and her cub, not to mention elephants, zebras, giraffes, buffalo and lions.

Leaving behind the wildlife 'adventure', the 'purpose' element of the journey continued with a drive back to Nairobi and a day spent with IN Kenya's Director, Jocelyn Muraya, visiting projects in the slums of Kibera and Kawangware. There are approximately 2.5 million slum dwellers in about 200 settlements in Nairobi representing 60% of the Nairobi population and occupying just 6% of the land.





*'Fig' the leopard.*

Kibera houses about 250,000 of these people. Kibera is the biggest slum in Africa and one of the biggest in the world. IN works with local groups based in the slums, providing education and support for adults and children, including support for the homeless. There was a real sense of hope and purpose in Kibera and the infrastructure is clearly improving.

The Real Hope Community Project is working with young adults helping them to find work, start businesses and find suitable housing. The group is made up of like-minded people who have themselves grown up within the slums and so can relate to those they are trying to help. IN is also supporting a Good News Club and an informal school in the slums.

After two nights in Nairobi, we flew to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we visited Ephata School for the Deaf and Clinique Papillion. Ephata is supported through child sponsorship and IN Canada was responsible for building the medical clinic in Lubumbashi. We stayed with Rachel Newby at the missionary guest house named 'Restawhile'. Rachel is a British midwife who left Birmingham for DRC

over 30 years ago and has been responsible for delivering over 1000 babies during her time there.

After a long and bumpy nine-hour drive to Solwezi, we were hosted by IN Zambia's Chairman, Benani Ikowa, and visited the ZACTS project – a school for orphans and vulnerable children. ZACTS has seen huge development in the last few years and is embarking upon a sustainable chicken-rearing enterprise to raise money for the school. ZACTS also looks to find the best use of its vast land in farming activities, concentrating mostly on cash crops and vegetables, which must support the school. Animal husbandry at the farm will also be a priority in the future.

The 'adventure' continued after a flight to Livingstone with two days spent visiting the Zambian and Zimbabwe sides of Victoria Falls and a river cruise on the Chobe River in Botswana – three countries in one day!

The final destination of our journey was South Africa. A change in mode of transport was planned and we were looking forward to two nights aboard 'The Pride of Africa' – a train



ride from Pretoria to Cape Town. Before setting off an extra 'project' was added to the itinerary with a visit to meet Chris Bradford (a former Oundle School Yale fellow and founder of the African Leadership Academy (ALA) situated in Johannesburg).

ALA ([www.africanleadershipacademy.org](http://www.africanleadershipacademy.org)) is a sixth form college for 200 students who are selected from across the continent and currently represent 45 African countries. It seeks to enable lasting peace and prosperity in Africa by developing and connecting the continent's future leaders, recognising that Africa's greatest need is ethical and entrepreneurial leadership, developing leaders who prevent wars, entrepreneurs who create jobs, and innovators that develop lasting solutions to the root causes of Africa's problems.

It was exciting and uplifting to tour the ALA and join an African studies class. The charming and gifted students, many of whom have humbling and inspiring stories, have so much optimism for the future of their continent. There is no doubt that ALA graduates will play a huge part in moving Africa forward.

Our journey finished with an overnight stay at Camps Bay, Cape Town, where we enjoyed a trip up Table Mountain, dining on the V&A Waterfront and a drive to Cape Point before flying home.

In addition to receiving the adventure of a lifetime, I feel I gained new perspectives on matters of life, legacy and other issues of social significance. The School has long established links with International Needs through its Community Action programme and a number of directors from developing countries have spoken to our pupils over the years. I very much hope to strengthen and develop these links further, both on a personal and professional level.

### Future *Umoja* journeys

The *Umoja* Journey is organized into a series of 'legs' corresponding to the six continents involved — North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. For further information about the *Umoja* journey visit [www.umojajourney.com](http://www.umojajourney.com)

*Umoja* Asia 2016 (September 2016): It is not too late to sign up! The 'Asia' journey will include visits to Bangladesh, Nepal and India, covering many amazing locations on the 'adventure' side. One of the 'purpose' highlights is a visit to Astha Guitars in Bangalore, India. Here, ACTS Group of Institutions — a school system providing an integrated approach to learning incorporating agriculture, crafts, trades and (academic) studies to more than 14,000 underprivileged children in India — is partnering the renowned Swiss company, Brunner Guitars, to train Indian craftsmen to manufacture a new brand of premium quality guitar using unique Indian woods and forward-looking technical design strategies. Profits from the sale of Astha Guitars in Canada, the United States and Europe will support the education of orphans and vulnerable children. For more information on Astha Guitars visit [www.umojajourney.com](http://www.umojajourney.com) and [www.asthaguitars.com](http://www.asthaguitars.com)

*Umoja* Africa 2017 (January 2017): From the lush greenery of Uganda to the rugged and beautiful southern Cape, the 'purpose' will showcase sustainable development initiatives in Buikwee Uganda, Gilgil and Nairobi Kenya, Lubumbashi DRC and Solwezi Zambia. The 'adventure' will include the spectacular mountain gorillas of Rwanda, the magnificent Victoria Falls, the beautiful Sabi Sands Game Reserve, and the journey will end in the stunning city of Cape Town.

*Liz Dillarstone is head of community action, Oundle School.*

# Focus on fundraising in readiness for regulation

Mark Jefferies reviews the impact of strengthened self-regulation of charity fundraising on independent schools



The inevitability of more robust and effective regulation of fundraising by charities following the publication of the Etherington Review is bound to cause concern among those running or leading charities, which include the vast majority of independent schools. Regulation seldom comes without a significant bureaucratic and administrative burden, primarily linked to reporting and accountability, and

providing evidence that appropriate procedures are in place and are being followed.

The good news is that the Etherington Review came down firmly on the side of self-regulation with teeth rather than a statutory regime, which would potentially have become an expensive and time consuming administrative nightmare. There is further good news in the fact that, assuming the Review's recommendations are implemented without major changes, the requirements appear, at this stage at least, to be reasonable and not too numerous or unrealistically demanding.

This is taking it in the context of the Craigmyle approach, which was the first UK organisation to develop a code of practice for fundraising, which was used as the basis for the Association of Fundraising Consultants' code as far back as 1991.

The Review was commissioned following growing public concern at the aggressive approach employed by some charities, or agencies acting on their behalf, in relation mostly to telephone, but also to direct mail, fundraising. This primarily related to existing donors being repeatedly and persistently pressured to increase their contribution, often aimed at elderly or vulnerable individuals. It would appear that the principal culprits were telephone fundraisers employed by agencies to act on behalf of charities on a commission basis.

What is puzzling to us is that anyone with any sense would realise that this approach is, in the medium to long term, far more likely to lose donors (and thus donations) than to gain them, and such has indeed proved to be the case. Since adverse impact on income is for most businesses, which charities most certainly are, the best incentive for a speedy behaviour change, one could justifiably assume that the problem would be addressed by charities themselves in their own self-interest.

In that case, why the need for further regulation? Well, there are two compelling reasons: first, vulnerable and elderly people still remain open to exploitation by telephone fundraisers desperate to meet quotas; secondly, the ineffectiveness of the existing self-regulation has allowed the development of undesirable practices that need to be stopped.

It is worth noting that the Association of Fundraising Consultants in the UK (along with the Association of Fundraising Professionals in the US) has always been opposed to the payment of fundraising on a commission basis, precisely because it encourages short termism and provides an incentive to put self-gain before the interest of a charity. In the words of the AFP Ethics Committee, if percentage-based compensation is accepted,

the charitable mission can become secondary to self-gain; donor trust can be unalterably damaged; and there is incentive for self-dealing to prevail over donors' best interests.

Unfortunately, not all organisations involved with charity fundraising in the UK take this view. Were they to genuinely embrace this principle, it is unlikely that we would see such practices at all. As far as mass telephone fundraising is concerned (*eg* the use of telethons), we have always opposed this approach, primarily because it can be regarded as intrusive and because there are, in our view, more effective and appropriate methods.

## The key recommendations of the Etherington Review

The abolition of the Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) and the establishment of a new regulator funded by a levy on charities spending more than £100,000 per annum on fundraising.

Adequate resources to reflect the enhanced role of the Fundraising Regulator.

A strong co-regulatory relationship with the Charity Commission or other relevant regulators.

Moving the supervision of Codes of Practice from the Institute of Fundraising (IoF) to the new Fundraising Regulator.

A single Code of Practice, clearly aligned with the Charity Commission's guides on charities and fundraising.

The speedy merger of the IoF and the Public Fundraising Association (PFRA) into a single organisation.

The creation of a registration 'badge' indicating commitment to regulation and high standards.

More focus on best practice and compliance by the merged PFRA/IoF body.

The creation of a 'Fundraising Preference Service', which would enable members of the public to opt out of unsolicited contact by charities and other fundraising organisations.

A move by fundraising organisations towards adopting a system of 'opt in' only in their communications with donors.

*Continued overleaf* →

## Services

The only recommendation that concerns us, and that should concern all schools engaged in fundraising, is the last one. Moving from 'opt out' to 'opt in' will have major and potentially harmful implications for fundraising. Under 'opt out' the inertia principle works to the advantage of providers such as charities, on the basis that only individuals who are genuinely concerned at being contacted will ask to be removed from a list, which in our view is as it should be.

However, under 'opt in', we think it is highly likely that many individuals will choose not to, either because they cannot be bothered, or because they think they will receive less direct mail, without having any specific objection. Thus it could have the potential to reduce the number of prospective supporters schools could approach. In case such a scenario comes to pass, we are in the process of preparing solutions which will be both legal and ethical, whilst also effectively addressing this situation.

### Regulation: the next steps

Following the publication of the Etherington Review, the Charity Commission published a consultation document 'Charity Fundraising – A Guide to Trustee Duties', with a consultation deadline of 11th February, 2016. As well as focusing on trustee duties, which the Commission regulates, it signposts to free sources of information about the wider legal rules that apply to specific types and aspects of fundraising, such as the rules on data handling and protection.

It also reflects other changes, such as those that will be introduced if the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill becomes law. The Commission makes it clear that it will expect **all** charities to comply with the Code of Practice. Lord Grade has been appointed interim chair of the new Fundraising Regulator. The FPS is in the process of being established.

In order to ensure a smooth transition from the current regulatory arrangement to the new system proposed in this report, the Review strongly recommended that a sector summit take place as a matter of urgency. The summit, which

took place in early December, had the involvement of the Office for Civil Society, the Charity Commission for England & Wales (and other national statutory regulators), the FRSB, the IoF, the PFRA and a sufficiently representative group of large and smaller fundraising charities.

The purpose of the summit was to formalise the necessary transitional arrangements. The Review expressed the expectation that the new Fundraising Regulator would be operating within six months from the publication of the report in September 2015, with the recommendations beginning to come into force by April 2016. This may be somewhat optimistic, given the amount of work that needs to be done.

### How will the recommendations affect schools?

Governors will need to be more closely involved with the oversight and implementation of fundraising and ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Regulator. Fundraising should in future be dealt with as a strategic governance issue, with clear statements as to its conduct and monitoring, risk assessment and management, code of ethics, the methods to be employed, complaints and privacy procedures, use of funds raised, investment protocols *etc.* Data protection protocols and practices will need to be reviewed in the light of revised guidance to be produced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regarding the use of data, what constitutes informed consent, *etc.*

All schools involved in fundraising are likely to have to state whether or not they are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. Schools with a fundraising spend of £100,000 or more a year will need to pay a levy to cover the cost of the regulator. Details of the levy have not been finalised but it is likely to be stepped in line with charity spend.

### What should schools do now?

Beyond making general preparations for the strategic oversight of fundraising at governor level, which may well suggest the formation of (yet another) governors' sub-committee, our view is that schools should await the result of the consultation on the Charity Commission's paper and the publication of the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Conduct, which is likely to differ in a number of respects from the Codes currently produced by the IoF. At that point they will need to think seriously about what they need to do to meet the requirements.

Craigmyle will be producing its own guidance, and – as it did when 'Public Benefit' became a key issue some years back – it will be advising and working with individual schools to ensure that simple, effective procedures are put in place to ensure compliance, whilst also ensuring that fundraising is conducted as effectively as possible.

*Mark Jefferies is the Managing Director of Craigmyle Consultants, with over 30 years of experience as a fundraising practitioner. He joined Craigmyle from a commercial marketing background in 1980 and has worked with some 150 clients, including national charities, churches and cathedrals, hospitals and welfare charities, with a particular focus on schools, conservation and heritage. He is a certificated member of the Institute of Fundraising and a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE).*

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*'All schools involved in fundraising are likely to have to state whether or not they are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. Schools with a fundraising spend of £100,000 or more a year will need to pay a levy to cover the cost of the regulator.'*

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# Caveat Head-hunters!

Anthony Millard examines the latest tribe to bear this title

'Always be nice to Head-hunters' is some stock advice I give my own children. But looking over my shoulder I feel I am increasingly skating on thin advice! Grim stories circulate of distinguished Heads being pestered by researchers, good candidates left feeling that they have been used as short-list fodder, and dark suspicions of recruitment consultancies bidding up salaries while at the same time inflating their fees.

It is hardly a surprise that, after estate agents and politicians, head-hunters are next in line for public contempt and derision. Having deserted academe for politics and then morphing into head-hunting, I hold my hands up!

Head-hunters, however, even in the world of LinkedIn, are here to stay. The tradition of boards bunging an advertisement in the *TES* and hoping for the best no longer fits with best practice in corporate governance, let alone the need to make great appointments. One of the fixtures in educational thinking, widely shared by the public, is that schools stand or fall on the basis of whether they have great leadership.

Call it 'distributed' or 'collaborative', it nevertheless all comes down to the person at the top of the greasy pole. In the state sector there is a chronic shortage of candidates, with frequent stories of applications being in single figures. In the independent sector, attractive deputy headships draw four or five times the numbers of applicants in comparison to headships.

Search consultants, when at their best, work in partnership with the board that retains them. As well as assisting with specific recruitment, they are also called upon to give strategic advice on identifying pools of talent within existing staff and establishing succession strategies. This is increasingly what 'retained' consultants provide in contrast to 'contingent' consultants, whose role is simply to offer candidates on a success-only basis for payment.

Head-hunting school Heads is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the top end, Diana Ellis paved the way with NB Selection and then Odgers, setting the highest standards. Other businesses have followed, of which my own is one. Among ISC schools it is now the case that approaching half of all Headship appointments are now managed by recruitment consultants.

More recently this trend has started to spread to the international sector. With our databases, network connections and sophisticated assessment methods for selection, it would be a foolhardy governing body that would wish to rely simply on their own endeavours. Anything less than a fully focused and professional search will, in any case, not satisfy those new wave fee-paying parents who expect our schools to be every bit as business-like as their own businesses.

So what is going wrong and giving Head-hunters such a bad name? An obvious issue is whether all this Head-hunting makes for better appointments. While the process of



Anthony Millard.

appointing has certainly been professionalized in a way that will meet the needs of modern Human Relations protocols, it is also the case that the duration of Headship has steadily reduced, with a small but growing number of cases where a Head spends less than five years in post before spiralling upwards.

While this reflects wider socio-economic patterns both within and outside education, it also erodes that continuity and stability which every good school needs. A wonderful thesis remains to be written which draws on the appraisal evidence from successful and unsuccessful Heads. Let it not be forgotten that successful Headship is a joint-product of individual leadership and governance support, and that there is an increasing toll of undue stress on Heads and a failure to extend 'wellness' from schools to those who lead them.

The phone rings. "Is that the Head? We are looking for a new head for Bassetshire Academy. Might you be able to make any recommendations ... Or even consider it for yourself?" The time taken over the dots will depend on the experience and skill of the researcher who is likely to be fairly lowly in the search-eating chain.

Cold calls are, in my opinion, nearly always a waste of time, but have now reached a frequency in the lives of leading Heads that has become embarrassing. It is time the Head-hunters stopped this primitive and irritating approach. While I am entirely in favour of 'intelligence-led' search, let us at least be a little more intelligent in our methods and approach.

An equally unsavoury practice is packing a short-list with 'no-hopers' simply to try and convince the client that the assignment has been worked assiduously. While we always aim at a final list of four candidates, there is absolutely no advantage for the client or the candidates by packing the numbers simply for the sake of it.

Continued overleaf 

## Services

That is not to say that a final list should not include a proper balance of rising stars and venerable warhorses, and it is always positive to look for diversity. But to put people through the whole process of applications and interviews for posts where their chances are remote is insulting and degrading.

Another unfathomable error is paying Head-hunters a percentage commission based on the appointment salary. No wonder our proposals sometimes contain inflated salary ranges when our own profits will benefit from bidding up! Anything else except fixed-fee proposals should be disregarded.

We Head-hunters are unregulated and unwashed. As long as we operate within the law we are at present safe, too safe. Apart from the central ethical issues of respect and fairness, a more immediate problem is that we have become irritating. I suspect we have also become greedy. Step forward ISC and institute a Royal Commission to sort us out, which I will naturally expect to chair!

*Anthony Millard was Headmaster of Wycliffe College and Giggleswick and chairman of the Boarding Schools Association in 2000. He is executive chairman of Anthony Millard Consulting which he founded in 2004.*

# Compliance? Think boilers not boilerplate

Simon Henthorn.



Schools are spending more and more time on the administration that results from apparently endless government legislation. As the state 'shrinks' so the paperwork swells. Keeping abreast of statutory requirements is costly because people have to be employed to do this, but much more costly if businesses, and in this arena, schools are businesses, fail to keep up. The demands of health and safety are, quite rightly, heavy, and safeguarding is not

a duty that can ever be neglected. Schools are well aware of this and do their very best to keep all boxes properly ticked and all requirements under review.

The battle for hearts and minds has been won, even if there are occasional lapses. But there are other areas which are, perhaps, less familiar, not that they are less important. Good advice from lawyers and HR consultants is a valuable form of maintenance, and, like maintenance of plant, can have some very nasty consequences if neglected. *C&CR* asked Simon Henthorn, head of education at the law firm Doyle Clayton, to explore one of these legal boiler rooms.

Employers who fail to pay their workers the National Minimum Wage (NMW) risk being named and shamed, as well as receiving financial penalties and having to pay the arrears owed. In February 2016 alone, more than 90 employers experienced this process. It is not as if they had not been warned, since a similar number were named and shamed in October 2015 and in both months, schools were on the list. Since the scheme was introduced in October 2013, 490 employers have been named and shamed, owing over £3m to their workers and being subject to fines totalling more than £1.1m.

Whilst in some cases failure to pay the NMW is deliberate, in the vast majority it is due to a lack of understanding of what the law requires. In particular, there is confusion over

who counts as a worker and is therefore entitled to the NMW. For instance, many schools offer work experience to gap year students to assist with lessons or to provide cover in boarding houses. They may be provided with lodging and pocket money, or they may be treated as an employee and paid a salary. Whether these roles attract the NMW will depend on whether the people doing them are classed as workers and, if so, whether any exemption applies.

### Who is entitled to the NMW?

Anyone who is a worker is entitled to the NMW, provided they are ordinarily working in the UK and are over compulsory school age. So, are work experience students workers? If they are simply work shadowing (*ie* observing) others at work but not actually doing any work themselves, then they will not be classed as a worker and will not be entitled to the NMW. However, most people undertaking work experience placements do more than simply observe: they are given tasks to perform and this makes them a worker entitled to the NMW.

But aren't they simply volunteers? In most cases they will not be. A person will only be classed as a volunteer if they have no obligation to work – they can come and go as they please – and if they are not entitled to any financial reward or other benefit for the work they do beyond the payment of reasonable out of pocket expenses.

There is a specific exemption for workers classed as 'voluntary workers' who are not entitled to the NMW. These are workers employed by charities who, though contractually obliged to work, receive no monetary payments other than reimbursement of expenses incurred in performing duties; and no benefits in kind other than the provision of reasonable subsistence and accommodation. There must be no element of profit for the worker in terms of what they receive. Schools that are charities may be able to rely on this exemption but should beware as it is construed narrowly.

Finally, there is one further exemption that may also be relevant to schools. Students undertaking work experience as a required part of a UK-based further or higher education course are not entitled to the NMW, provided that their placement does not exceed one year.

### Work experience students from outside the EU

In the case of workers coming to the UK on a Government Authorised Exchange visa, employers must strictly adhere to the terms of the visa, some of which only permit volunteering with no payment, whilst others allow work and therefore do require payment of the NMW.

### How much is the NMW?

From 1 April 2016, a new NMW rate, known as the National Living Wage, was introduced for workers aged 25 and over. The NMW rates increase on 1 October each year. The current rates are as follows:

National Living Wage – workers aged 25 and over – from 1 April 2017	£7.20 per hour
Standard adult rate – workers aged 21 to 24	£6.70 per hour
Development rate: workers aged 18 to 20	£5.30 per hour
Young worker rate: workers aged under 18 but above compulsory school age (other than apprentices)	£3.87 per hour
Apprentice rate: apprentices under 19 years of age, or aged 19 and over but in the first year of their apprenticeship.	£3.30 per hour

Where free accommodation is provided, there is a limited accommodation allowance which can count towards the NMW at a current rate of £5.35 per day.

### What happens if you get it wrong?

HMRC is responsible for enforcing the NMW and employers who fail to comply face potentially severe penalties. HMRC can carry out an investigation of its own volition or following a complaint by a worker.

If HMRC finds that an employer has not paid the NMW, it will serve a notice of underpayment requiring the employer to pay the arrears to the workers concerned and to pay a financial penalty to the Secretary of State within 28 days. The financial penalty is currently set at 200% of the total underpayment for each worker, subject to a minimum of £100 and to a maximum of £20,000 per worker underpaid. If payment is made within 14 days, then the penalty is reduced by 50%.

As well as financial penalties, employers will be named and shamed if they are found to owe over £100, subject to limited exceptions. In some cases, including deliberate failures to pay the NMW, a criminal prosecution is possible and company directors may also face disqualification.

Just as boilers and electrical systems need inspection and maintenance, so do a school’s legal obligations. A proactive approach is essential in both cases, but that takes time and

money. Setting up a system of regular compliance ‘health checks’ is a sensible approach to all aspects of a school’s immensely wide-ranging responsibilities. Whether conducted in-house or by consultants, it is nevertheless time and money well spent.

## HERE & THERE



### Tackling issues

Tackling in schoolboy rugby is a hot topic at the moment and TV company Sky visited St Benedict’s School in March to get some opinions on the subject and catch the Ealing boys training on the rugby field. They were making a short film about the issue after a recent press statement by doctors calling for a ban on tackling in school rugby matches.

Director of sport Nikki Woodroffe said: “Sky approached St Benedict’s, as a school with a strong tradition of rugby, to comment on this recent issue of tackling within junior rugby, which is classed as under 18. As rugby is one of our core sports, played over two terms, it is very close to our hearts and so naturally director of rugby James Coles and the boys were happy to comment.”

Members of the U15 squad were not in favour of the proposed changes: “Without the physicality rugby would change to a different sport,” one of the boys said. Another added: “We are taught to tackle safely and safety always comes first so I don’t think it’s an issue.” James Coles conceded that there is always the risk of injury but believed that the positives outweigh the negatives.

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## Abbotsholme School pupils on BBC's *Countryfile*

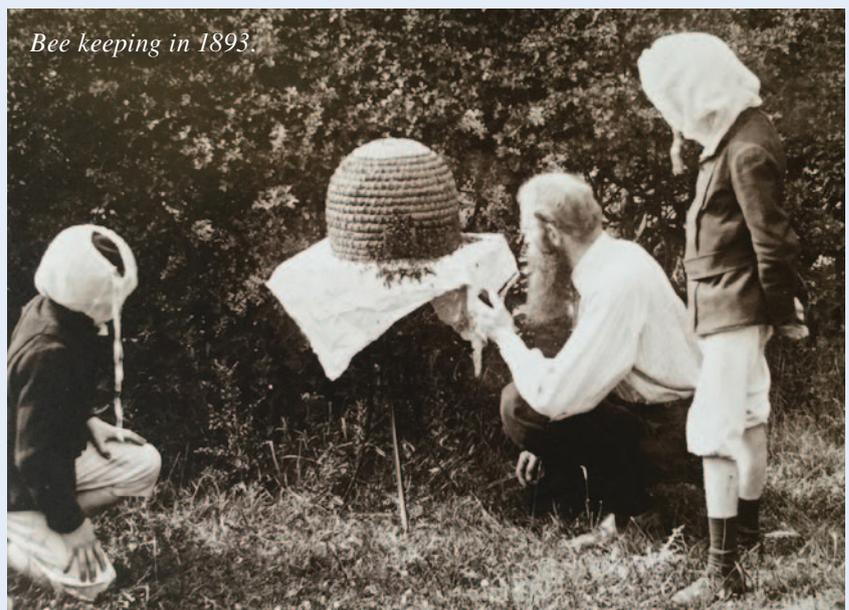
Abbotsholme School hosted Sunday night favourite *Countryfile* at the school on Friday 5th February with sixth form agriculture pupils taking centre stage with presenters Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison.

BTEC Agriculture Year 13 pupils Rachel Hames (Farm Manager), Ben Collier, Gregory King, Tara Witcomb and Year 12 pupils Alice Wood and Adam Wright were central to the filming on the school farm with Matt and Ellie.

Abbotsholme School featured for about 12 minutes across two films. The first film included a history interview with Steve Fairclough, the Headmaster, which then cut to the farm and joined sixth form pupils sorting out the shed. During this scene, the sixth form pupils were filmed preparing the hurdles, whilst prep school pupils were feeding the goats.

This scene was followed by local vet Robert, from Glenthorne Vets, showing Alice and Adam (Year 12 agriculture pupils) how to vaccinate pregnant ewes against clostridial diseases, which they then had a go at under his watchful eye. The second film focussed on tractor driving training, described by Christina Liddle, head of rural estate education.

A number of images taken around the school from over 100 years ago also appeared in the programme, taken from Abbotsholme's archives. These images show that Cecil Reddie's vision of a new school, which valued practical learning alongside academic learning, is still in evidence today.



# What religious education really looks like

Ronan Head recommends the view from and in his classroom

I teach religious education (RE) in the shadow of Worcester Cathedral. When I turn left out of my classroom, the cathedral looms over me as the omnipresent Anglican sentinel of a school that was founded by Henry VIII. Being in the grounds of the cathedral is just one aspect of a school that is, in many respects, a faith school on steroids.

The list of Christian activities supported by the school is long and varied: weekly Eucharists in the cathedral crypt; assemblies in the candle-lit quire; a Christian Union; the celebration of the main Christian festivals; confirmation preparation; and RE classes that have as a goal the education of pupils in Christian literacy.

The school's Christian character goes further still. The Headmaster is a practising Christian, as is the head of RE; we have a full-time chaplain who acts as an important voice for the school's religious ethos; academic scholars are inducted into the cathedral's ancient foundation; choir boys sit in lessons by day and sing Evensong at night; and the Dean and canons of the cathedral serve as school governors.

We are an Anglican school and make no apologies for it. Indeed, it is hard to find a piece of publicity for the school that does not make some kind of mention of our 'Church of England Foundation and Christian ethos.' This is not a marketing catchphrase but a genuine expression of who we are.

Some things have not changed over the almost five centuries of the school's existence. I asked our archivist to look at how religion has been taught over the years. I have seen the Scripture Knowledge O Level exams from 1958; a text-book list from 1906 (including Hillard's *Life of Christ*); and the full roll of the winners of the Bishop of Worcester's Divinity Prizes.

In all of this we are following a tradition that began with the teaching of the Rule of St Benedict when Worcester was a monastery. Perhaps it is also time to bring back a 16th century entrance exam requirement that boys be able to recite the Lord's Prayer, the Angelus, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments.

The above sketch may be horrifying to those who think that religion and education should not be so closely related. That would appear to be the view of the British Humanist Association (BHA), who seem intent to further secularism's advance by turning RE into some kind of tepid values' education. Apparently, if two out of a child's 100 or so waking hours per week are given over to a discussion of faith, our humanist gods will be greatly troubled: human rights only work in one direction – away from supposedly medieval superstition.

My teaching mentor at Oxford, Terence Copley, once said that the teaching of RE was a human right, since it offered a view of the world that children should be exposed to by way of balancing the other views that predominate in their



lives. The battle does not end there. The recent report by the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life calls for 'a statutory entitlement to a curriculum about religion, philosophy and ethics' and 'greater religion and belief literacy' as if these things are not already provided by RE.

Apparently, whatever RE is, it is not good enough and needs to be fixed by legislation. This school of thought also seeks a disengagement of the Church of England from public life. I teach at a robustly Anglican school and yet would argue that religious education here is exactly of the sort that would please the report's authors.

Given what might seem like the wretched indoctrination of children at my school, I suppose I should explain what

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else happens there in the realm of religion as a matter of regular fact. This week alone, pupils have discussed one Jewish teacher's conversion to Judaism, begun their revision of Buddhism for their GCSE examinations, and told me what they would like to know about Islam. (Hinduism and Sikhism will be taught in the summer.)

A few years ago we renamed our department the 'Department of Religion and Philosophy' because this title better reflects what we do. We are as likely to teach Aristotle as we are Jesus, but in both cases we do so from a position of critical realism, subjecting the gospels to a rigorous academic examination. In Philosophy Club last week we discussed the ethics of war. Earlier that day, the Year 9s had lessons on the ontological argument for the existence of God (an argument that Christians like Thomas Aquinas hated) and the challenge to faith from Darwinism.

The BHA is leading the campaign to have non-religious world views included on the GCSE specifications, but does not seem to realise that they are already there. Pupils are required to subject religious views to criticism and come to their own conclusions. When I read their essays, I am more likely to hear defences of atheism than I am of Roman Catholic dogma. That is the reality of RE today: it is robust and open to all beliefs and none. One sometimes wonders whether the anti-RE straw man was built during the scripture classes of yesteryear.

So, this is what RE and a religious character to a school look like in my world. There is absolutely no disconnect between being a faith school and a desire to provide children with a view of the world that is reflective of 21st century reality. It is true that I teach at an independent school and might therefore seem to be outside the conversation of state education, but the opposite is in fact true. We have the freedom to express our religious values in very vigorous ways – and we do! – but that does not hinder in any way either the teaching of other religions or the criticisms of religion that come from non-theistic positions.

How do we manage to do this? Simple: we have committed and well-educated teachers of religion who are comfortable expressing their own views and willing to have them challenged. Perhaps therein lies the way forward, not in the heavy-handed regulation of RE (we manage fine without it, thanks) but in the proper selection and training of RE teachers.

Good teachers teach good (meaning broad, philosophical, undogmatic) RE. A greater commitment to recruiting and funding the training of quality RE teachers will do more good than any diktats regarding school and religion that come from on high.

*Dr Ronan Head teaches religious education at The King's School, Worcester. He is co-chair of the Independent Schools Religious Studies Association and is a principal religious studies examiner with AQA.*

## HERE & THERE

### Nottingham Girls' High School footballers show racism the red card

There is something special about Nottingham when it comes to football. Notts County, founded in 1862, is the oldest football team in the professional game, followed closely by near neighbours Nottingham Forest in 1865.

Less well known is what is perhaps the oldest women's football club in the world, Nottingham Girls' High School (GDST), whose football team first played in 1880, challenging opinion at the time and even coming under a Football Association ban in 1921 when member clubs were forbidden to let ladies play on their pitches.

But now the girls enjoy regular football training sessions with Nottingham Forest coaches at school, and 15 girls recently visited the City Ground for a day of football and a presentation by the UK's anti-racism educational charity, Show Racism the Red Card.

As the Head, Sue Gorham, commented: "It's absolutely fantastic that we've got our own senior football team and we are developing a junior football team. To see our girls today learn from the expertise of Nottingham Forest coaches and championship players and have the opportunity to work with them regularly is a sign of how times and opinions about women in sport have changed! We really work to nurture the sporting potential of our students and encourage all of them to be aware and proactive when it comes to current issues."

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# Only connect

## Faiths come together at Bolton School to move beyond Prevent

The decision of the Department of Education to include school ‘governing bodies, school leaders and school staff in maintained schools’ in the Prevent strategy has provoked lively debate.

‘Ofsted’s revised common inspection framework for education, skills and early years, which comes into effect from 1 September 2015, makes specific reference to the need to have safeguarding arrangements to promote pupils’ welfare and prevent radicalism and extremism.’

Extremism is defined as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.’ *(Passages in quotation marks are from the Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers, June 2015, to be found on the Gov.uk website.)*

Philip Britton, Headmaster of Bolton School Boys’ Division, believes passionately that schools should be places where faith can be openly discussed. “It is absolutely essential that we provide safe spaces to have discussion in schools about these very serious issues rather than allow the Prevent strategy to cause teachers to close down debate.” He therefore brought together and chaired a panel discussion focusing on ‘Living a Life of Faith Within Society’.

The panel, which included speakers from different faith groups, was united in feeling that the Prevent strategy was far from ideal, not least because, as Dr Siema Iqbal, a Manchester GP, said:

By shutting down debate, it takes away safe places for children and students to discuss issues, which then makes them more vulnerable to extreme views. Where can young people go to talk about their radical views? If we shut down debate in universities, schools and madrassas, where do they go to have their opinions challenged? Prevent has identified some of the reasons why people become vulnerable to radicalisation, such as socio-economic deprivation, mental health issues and a lack of sense of belonging, and these are issues that need to be discussed and addressed.

Imam Qari Asim, MBE, a senior imam and lawyer from Leeds, agreed that radicalisation is a challenge, but it involves a very small minority. He believes that the Muslim community needs to engage with itself and work out what the causes of extremism are. ‘The government and Muslim community also need to work together to address this challenge.’

The panel was asked whether schools’ admissions policies based on faith have a positive or negative effect on community cohesion and whether religious observance issues should be considered when scheduling public exam timetables.

Rev Mark Poulson, secretary for inter-religious affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury, said that young people need advice about how to accommodate exams and fasting. He also admitted that some Church of England schools have been at their worst in terms of admissions policies and he proposed a major national conversation about faith schools. →



Inter-faith panel.

## Faith and community



Dr Iqbal was happy for her two boys to attend a non-faith school during the week and the mosque at weekends. Addressing the exam question, Imam Asim argued that where possible we should take into account religious observance and the Headmaster hoped there would be agreement before the summer!

Rabbi Ben Rickman, head of religious studies at Manchester's King David School, is a great advocate of faith schools, but believes that they have a responsibility to educate students to be understanding of others. Although working in a Jewish school can involve fencing around the campus, terrorist drills and security guards, once you get beyond this façade it is a regular school, with all that comes with it.

If you can find common ground anything can happen. Muslim boys came into his school to help deliver an assembly and prayed in Jewish classrooms, and he took a Jewish class to talk to Muslim girls about Judaism. He also cited an example of Jewish, Muslim and Christian children working together at what he sees as the most ethnically diverse Tesco in the world, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, to raise funds for Manchester's Children Hospital.

He runs Sunday night classes in modern Hebrew for Jews and Christians and is in discussion with the military about the possibility of an 'All Souls Chaplaincy', which would open up the position of chaplain to people of a non-Christian faith so that spiritual guidance can be offered to soldiers of all creeds.

Dealing with the issue of whether religion is still relevant in this country, Rev Mark Poulson argued that faith should take its place at the centre of public life. We have a precious freedom in the UK that we must not take for granted, in that we are allowed to believe passionately but we can also be challenged about our views.

Professor Mona Siddiqui, OBE, of Edinburgh University, agreed that in the UK we allow people to express their views, but we don't really make space for religious voices to be heard. We only talk about faith in the West when there is a problem, and consequently religious voices then sound defensive. Educational establishments are a good place to have a debate about the ways in which secularism affects religion and religion affects secularism.

The spotlight is currently on the Muslim world for all the

wrong reasons. Whilst religion has an emotional hold, life has endless opportunities to develop new communities and make new friends. We do not only have one identity or belong to one community. The most significant single thing that can be done when we talk about community cohesion is to change public perception from faith as being part of the problem to faith being part of the solution.

Imam Asim said that Muslims are facing two key challenges – we need to guard against extremists who are a small minority on one side and Islamophobia on the other side. We should not forget that there are millions of people in between these two extremes who want to live peaceful lives of faith. Islam recognises other faiths and encourages co-existence, contrary to the press stereotype that religions do not get on. It is important that faiths show their commonality and make the world an even more beautiful place to live in.

Wrestling with the question of whether religions should change to fit into a world which is becoming more atheistic, various responses were forthcoming. Rabbi Rickman conceded that it is more difficult these days to raise your family in religion because of so many outside distractions. Whilst we need to avoid the distractions of technology, we cannot shut the door on the modern world.

Professor Siddiqui believes that the country is not becoming more atheistic but more agnostic. People have lost faith in religious institutions because we are not speaking their language or answering the questions that people are asking. Religions are not born in a moment, but change and reform gradually and constantly.

Imam Asim would argue that the teachings do not need to be reformed but that it is important to make things relevant: Islam has the flexibility to adapt to the environment it is in. Dr Iqbal felt radicalisation comes from people misinterpreting religion, often because they feel vulnerable through a lack of identity with the country that they are in. The *Qur'an* teaches us to be kind, tolerant and accepting and we need to stick to these fundamentals, values that tie in with the values of this country.

*Bolton School is celebrating 500 years of education in Bolton and 100 years of the Bolton School Foundation.*

# *Noye's Fludde* and anti-elitist collaborative art music

David Lawson celebrates the all round opportunities of Britten's most accessible opera

The term 'Collaborative production' has been around in many guises for decades. 'Community Project' is what it might have been called in the 1980s and quite what Benjamin Britten would have said is anyone's guess. At a time of tightening budgets and an ever-sharper focus on value for money, charitable status and shared resources, it's a brave school that dedicates a large chunk of time and resources to the production of an opera.

But when *Noye's Fludde* was conceived it was always imagined that its creation and rehearsal, just as much as its performance, would be an inclusive act of musical education and would draw in as many people as practicable. Among many challenges facing independent schools is the question of convincing people at large that we are not 'exclusive' or 'elitist' in the pejorative sense, even if we do strive for elite goals.

When Boris Ford, commissioning editor at Rediffusion, wrote to Britten suggesting a television collaboration, what

he had in mind was 'an intimate piece of musical education ... watching a piece of music take shape and in some degree growing with it'. This philosophy sits so firmly at the heart of *Noye's Fludde* that when The Grange (Monmouth Prep School) decided to stage it they always knew this would be a great way to reach out.

Early rehearsals quickly taught us that the musical challenges were just the start. Every one of the school's 130 pupils would be involved and would be making his own mask, as well as learning his part and, in the case of eight older boys, directing groups of pupils around them.

But Britten's vision extends beyond this, and we were able to exploit the community aspects of the work to extend our project out into the local area in exactly the way he intended: the percussion ensemble is professionals and school pupils working together; the recorder choir which has agreed to take part is an adult one, unconnected with The Grange; 130 masks were designed by the pupils and made under the



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guidance of 21 students from a nearby university; many of the instrumental parts were rehearsed and played by boys from Monmouth School; and the hand bells have been loaned to us by Millennium Chimes Hand Bells of Raglan.

This last aspect has caused much comment. The hand bells were played by members of staff at The Grange (including support staff members) who are not music specialists and have learned the technique from scratch. Britten stipulated that no attempt should be made to hide the instrumentalists from sight, and this would be followed to the letter.

An aspect of the project is the use of two professional opera singers as Noye and Mrs Noye. Their presence really colours the whole show, not least because theirs are the only adult voices to be heard (if one discounts God, played by the director, David Murray). So this could very easily be labelled as 'buying in talent', but that misses the point. Anyone who was present at the many rehearsals we were able to have with the very generous Matthew Duncan and Rosie Middleton will have seen the effect their presence, and their professionalism, has had on the boys who were rehearsing *with* them.

This point is key: each singer costs about the same as booking a professional speaker for a conference or a performance artist for an afternoon show, but in neither of those cases would the pupils have been able to bring the sum of their work thus far to the arena and mould and polish it in dialogue with two professional artists at the top of their game.

Seen in that context, it is my view that the performance itself is almost immaterial, whatever fun it might be: the process of rehearsal is where most lessons are learned.

The most convincing evidence of that is when I witness a ten-year-old boy, totally on top of the musical challenges, becoming exasperated with one of the professionals and finally saying: "I can sing it here or (runs to another spot on the stage) here; which do you want?" This is a musical and educational experience second to none.

Joseph Walton, the musical director for the show, would be happy to be described as a musical 'enabler' and like all enablers he knows how to delegate. Having taught the Kodaly handsigns to the whole school, several older boys could then use them to direct their own groups around them, not only in rehearsal but in the performance too, and indeed on the first night, when the audience was slipping out of time in the slow final hymn, two of those boys turned to the audience and began signing (not singing!) at them and beating time.

Furthermore, on both nights it was an 11 year-old assistant director whose handsigns were not only a signal for the final Amen of the eight-part canon but for the handbells too, being played by staff members of The Grange. The performance had become a democracy. To appoint a boy to such a role was not planned; it emerged from his infectious enthusiasm and ability to step into any other boy's role at a moment's notice, so it seemed only fair that he should be provided with an official title. Good education is not about what the teachers can do, it's about what they can teach their pupils to do, and on the faces of people who had no connection with the school other than being in the audience that night, the wry smile was plainly visible.

Educational music was hardly a new idea in 1957, but unlike his predecessors Saint-Saëns and Prokofiev, Britten sought to educate by inclusion in the performance. Not only that, the opera is conceived in such a way that it cannot be performed without the presence of amateur children on the platform. Many musicians, myself included, want as many people as possible to know that art music is not elitist, but this message is not easy to get across.

The issue is one of accessibility. In the same way many who work in independent education are passionate about the benefits of a system driven by tough goals, commercial realities and teaching which is untrammelled by short-lived ideologies, and want people to know what truly drives us on.

We want as many people as possible to benefit from this, but how to get the message beyond the walls? Adverts in the press can be rather moot, and open days are not necessarily open to everyone. The website is a brilliant tool of course but a dramatic performance is a terrific way to bring people in to a dynamic and vigorous showcase of all that is good about your school.

How does one get that message beyond people who have *already* chosen to send their children to your school and to those who may be wavering between you and a good maintained school? Well, judging by the number of people who bought a ticket, not because their son was in it but because they wanted to see the performance, can I suggest you stage *Noye's Fludde*?

*David Lawson is the director of music at Monmouth School.*

*...Britten sought to educate by inclusion in the performance. Not only that, the opera is conceived in such a way that it cannot be performed without the presence of amateur children on the platform.*





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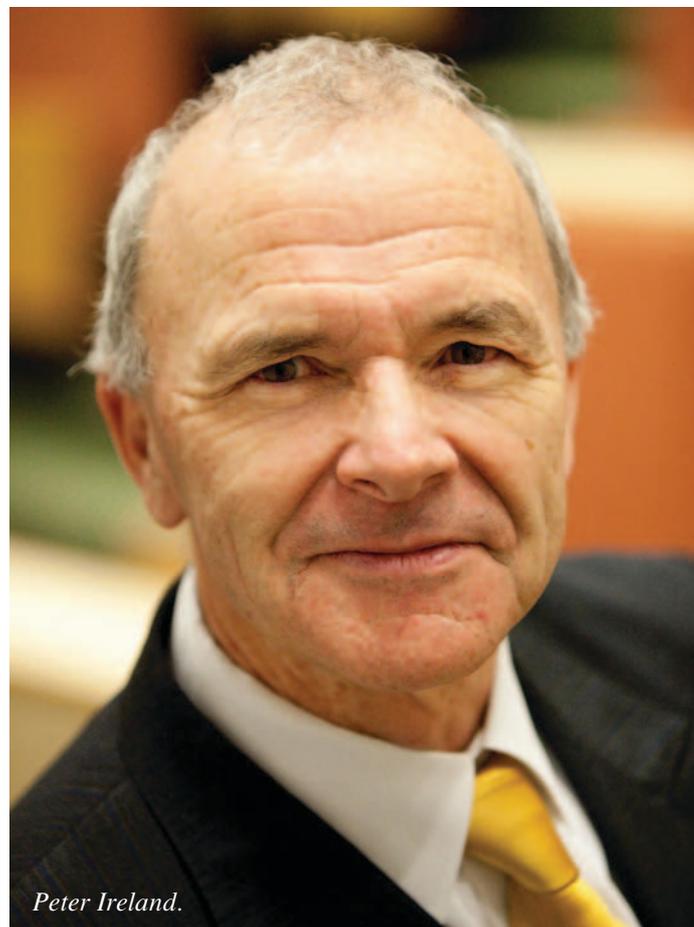
# When theory becomes practice

Peter Ireland shares a school leadership case study

As well as being Headmaster of a very popular school, Charles Raymond is an articulate and discursive man. So he enjoyed the opportunity to expound upon the principles and practices that lay behind his school's success. And when the discussion turned to his two deputies, his happiness-level rose still higher. Sitting back in his chair, he smiled and nodded in avuncular fashion.

"They're both young, intelligent and ambitious, but with very different personalities. Paul's incredibly driven and he tends to see things very clearly. Once he's decided that a particular course of action is the right one, he's a stranger to compromise. If he thinks there's an important principle involved, he's *got* to have his way. And that's fine, of course, until there's someone else involved who thinks differently!

"Now, the truth of it is that he's usually right – he's a bright chap – but as I once said to him, 'The problem with you having total victory, Paul, is that someone else has to experience total defeat.' To be fair, though, it's never *personal* with him – it's always about things that he genuinely does see as matters of principle; it's never just about status or power. In fact, once he's got his way on something and it turns out that he was right, it doesn't seem to bother him when people assume it was my idea all along!



Peter Ireland.

"Alexander's quite the opposite. He's very status-conscious and very much a political animal. He's not without principles but he's much more pragmatic in his approach than Paul; he certainly won't go to the stake for them. Some of the senior HoDs here are significantly older than him, which could have been a problem for him as director of studies, but it's impressive the way he's cultivated them – he's very *savvy*, he never pushes them too far.

"It's noticeable, though, that with less senior staff he behaves quite differently. He has his acolytes among them, particularly in his subject area, where he's a real expert, but he can be sharp with junior colleagues. His name's a bit of a mouthful really but if any of them forget themselves and call him 'Alex'... well, let's say they only do it once! I think he'd actually prefer it if they all had to call him 'Dr McCulloch'! I must be fair, though: he's hard working and very efficient, and I think the entire common room respects him for that.

"Life gets difficult for me when the pair of them come into conflict. It doesn't happen very often: their roles are quite separate; both of them are good at their jobs... and actually, Alexander will go to some lengths to avoid confrontation because he fears losing face... But when it does, that's when *my* political skills are at a premium!

"When it comes down to it, though he's certainly the more difficult to handle, Paul is the more important player. He's driven through a lot of important developments here over the last few years and the principles on which he operates are, by and large, the same as mine. He's a more divisive figure in the common room than Alexander, though. He's generally an amiable enough character, but he's got a low tolerance of slackness and, when he's on a mission, he sometimes tramples on people without even noticing they're there.

"Now, as Headmaster, I see my main role as an *enabler*. I like to give people not only the freedom to act but also the encouragement to act – and I don't think people will act unless they feel valued. So that means I have to support my senior team, but it also means I sometimes have to spend time putting balm on toes that they've trodden on! I firmly believe that a happy common room is necessary for a successful school – and you can't have a happy common room if it's divided. I think that's a lesson that both of my talented young men have yet fully to appreciate. In their different ways, they're both young men in a hurry, but good leaders always put the needs – and feelings – of others first."

The Headmaster smiled and leant forward conspiratorially. "I feel an aphorism coming on." He paused for dramatic effect. "It's like this. Paul doesn't care who gets the credit as long as he gets his way; Alexander doesn't care who gets his way so long as he gets the credit; and I don't care who gets his way and who gets the credit so long as the job gets done."

The common room didn't quite see it like that. A series of one-to-one interviews confirmed that Alexander did have a small group of acolytes, while Paul had generated two

## Heads

slightly larger groups – one of fervent admirers; the other of resentful critics. Beyond these, however, there was virtual unanimity of judgement. Alexander was seen as an ambitious, capable young man on the make – a recognisable type who was bound for Headship, and who represented a phenomenon as unavoidable as a grey, damp English bank holiday: the educational careerist.

Paul, on the other hand, generated a feeling close to awe in his colleagues. Even his critics recognised him as a man on a mission, someone who not only cared about educational matters but who could be relied on to act on those feelings and the principles behind them. Remarkably, even some of those who expressed a dislike of his personality and beliefs confessed that he would be the SMT member to whom they would go if faced with a serious professional problem with which they required support.

The Headmaster, by contrast, attracted little in the way of strong feelings. He was seen as a decent, kindly but inconsequential man. He found it hard to say “No” to people and was, therefore, easily manipulated by those with a mind to do so. He certainly was not to be looked to when a strong lead was required. Alexander ran the school’s systems; Paul drove the school forward and safeguarded its values.

Harvard psychologist and leadership theorist David McClelland would have been delighted to visit the school in our case study because it exemplifies perfectly his theory of human motivation. In a famous article ‘Power is the Great Motivator’, he argues that leaders are driven by one or more of three great needs: an affiliative need; a need for personal power; a need for organisational achievement.

Affiliative leaders, like Mr Raymond, need to be liked more than they need to get things done; and inevitably this makes

them ineffective leaders. They hate making unpopular decisions and they lack consistency because they tend to say “Yes” to everyone. Leaders driven by a need for personal power tend to be better performers because their need for tangible success usually brings benefits to those under them. It’s unlikely that, when Alexander gets his Headship, he’ll prove incompetent at it or tolerate major incompetence in his subordinates.

The best leaders, however, work out their ambitions *through* the organisations they serve. It would be a very odd leader who was not, in a deep sense, self-centred – but when the need for personal affirmation that we all feel is transferred to the organisation (or department) that we run, leadership at the very highest level becomes possible. This is because the success of others becomes an inseparable part of the leader’s personal agenda and, in the long run, this cannot fail to become clear to them.

And this knowledge is intrinsically motivating: we all need to feel that what we do is important – and is seen as being important by our boss. There’s no reason at all to think that Paul is a nicer or better man than his Headmaster, but his need (for the school to exemplify his principles and standards) is more institutionally productive than Charles Raymond’s need. Though we ought to give Mr Raymond credit for his powers as a talent-spotter, there’s little doubt that Paul will make the most effective Headmaster of the three.

Leadership is a supremely practical activity, but there are times when theory can throw some light on what constitutes good practice and why.

*Peter Ireland is director of leadership courses at the University of Buckingham and he runs the MEd in educational leadership there.*

# Bring on the tweachers

Top teachers twitter too: Tim Jefferis finds that many school leaders are enthusiastic about these brief encounters

Being a leader can be a lonely experience. It is no surprise, therefore, that biographies of leaders often make reference to a sense of isolation, particularly when hard decisions have had to be made: think of Margaret Thatcher’s famous aphorism, ‘You can’t lead from the crowd’. Similarly, academic studies into the career pathways of senior leaders also suggest that a sense of isolation is one of the defining characteristics of leadership. Gronn, for example, whose book *The making of educational leaders* (Cassell, 1999) is required reading for students of the genre, explains how leaders have to come to terms with

a growing sense of isolation or aloneness. With career movement there come changes in one’s immediate reference group, so that relationships with former close associates amongst peers and colleagues have to be recast. One is no longer at liberty to swap quite the same intimacies as before and, indeed, one’s circle of intimates shrinks. (p.181)

My own movement into senior leadership, back in September 2011, happened to coincide with a rash decision to sign up for

a Twitter account. As I began to explore, it quickly became apparent that there was a lively and diverse community of teachers on Twitter, many of them Heads and senior leaders. And so it was that I set out to make this community (often referred to as ‘tweachers’ by those in the know) the focus of my doctoral research. I wanted to discern whether social media was eroding leaders’ widely reported sense of isolation and whether it was impacting on their professional lives in other ways.

Over the course of a two-year period I interviewed 21 senior leaders, of whom ten were serving Heads, many of them in independent schools. I also ‘harvested’ their timelines (with their permission of course!) to find out how they were using Twitter as they went about their daily business. Several themes emerged from the research.

### Connectedness and serendipity

All the leaders I interviewed welcomed the opportunity to connect with others outside their school. The sense that ‘a problem shared is a problem halved’ came across strongly.

The beauty of Twitter, it seemed, was that exchanges can be relatively anonymous, with people far outside your normal frame of reference. Added to this, perversely perhaps, the leaders I spoke to felt able to be more, not less, open online. Discussions of sensitive topics with trusted fellow tweachers could always divert to the private message functionality on Twitter if this was felt necessary.

Leaders told me that they relished this sense of connectedness and the window it afforded them onto educational issues across the globe. One recounted the friendships she had made with a group of American principals; another described getting vicariously involved in the online discussions that came out of an Australian educators' conference.

Here were connections that had led leaders to interact with fellow professionals they would simply never have met in their offline lives. The serendipitous nature of these connections, a corollary of the messy, organic way in which Twitter networks grow, only served to heighten leaders' enjoyment of them.

### Professional learning networks

Many of the leaders I spoke to actively cultivated their 'professional learning networks' through Twitter. Some used the list functionality in Twitter to help them digest the output of those they followed: all had timelines that they returned to time and again for information and inspiration. By way of illustration, one Head shared with me how he had sought help from Twitter when he first took up post:

One of my first tasks here was to set up a performance related pay policy. I had no idea what to do, but I connected with @johntomsett and @headguruteacher through Twitter who had posted their own policies publicly for people to share. Having discussed these with them, I felt knowledgeable about something that not long before I'd been totally ignorant about.

This ability to share, to collaborate and to seek advice from people in the same line of work was hugely valued by the leaders I interviewed. In being free, convenient and reciprocal, most argued that it trumped more traditional forms of training.

### Social validation and career capital

Several leaders also described how Twitter bolstered their sense of self-worth. When unpopular decisions had to be made, there was always a community of fellow professionals to fall back on for support and encouragement. Nearly all of those I spoke to admitted to feeling a frisson of excitement when something they had tweeted drew a response from their followership. A few were even brave enough to admit to a form of 'affirmation addiction' in this regard.

Meanwhile, for several of those I interviewed, Twitter had become a channel through which they were able to further their careers. One of my interviewees attributed a recent promotion to his large Twitter following, a following he had built up through cultivating a reputation as a thought leader on educational issues. The message is clear: for those who want to reach out and get it there is considerable career capital to be gained from actively managing your social media presence.

### Confirmation bias and link posting

One of the most common criticisms of Twitter, and of social media in general, is the ease with which it is possible to



*Tim Jefferis.*

surround yourself only with those who agree with you. Thus Twitter can become an 'echo-chamber' in which you only hear the things you want to hear. This problem is compounded by the algorithms that drive the platform, with Twitter serving subscribers with suggestions of people to follow and articles to read that are based, in large part, on previous interests.

The majority of my interviewees were aware of the danger of confirming their own particular biases in this way. They made efforts to engage in discussion with those they didn't always agree with, or at least, from time to time, to dip into material that they knew would challenge them. Most were honest enough, though, to recognise that they preferred agreement to disagreement and affirmation to criticism, with most actively avoiding the spats that can flare up on Twitter.

If a criticism can be levelled at the platform it is that the 140 character restriction stifles proper debate. As one of my interviewees explained,

Social media is not a good forum for proper debate: people coalesce into interest groups; Devil's Advocates struggle; gunslingers and snipers shut down discussion.

That being said, respondents agreed that Twitter is excellent at signposting long-form debate that appears elsewhere ('link posting' in the lingo). A good number of my interviewees supplemented their activity on Twitter with a blog hosted somewhere else in cyberspace. Here they were able to voice opinions and unpick further conversations that had begun on Twitter.

By taking the time to put their ideas in the public domain, thoughts are marshalled in a way that they couldn't otherwise be. As one respondent explained, subjecting her ideas to the court of public opinion on her blog meant that she 'put words to challenging or difficult ideas or concepts I wouldn't have discussed in any other forum.'

### Unresolved tensions

Many of my respondents referred either directly or indirectly

## Heads

to unresolved tensions in their use of Twitter. Was their output personal or corporate? Was it school-based or outward looking? Who was their target audience? Most agreed that the irreverent, democratising nature of Twitter, and its ability to short-circuit traditional power structures – to allow anyone to converse with the world – is at once both liberating and fraught with danger.

Indeed, unwillingness amongst most leaders to restrict themselves to one constituency in their online social output, coupled to the public nature of the medium, presented what one leader referred to as an ‘unresolved tension’ in their online lives. Yet few wanted their accounts, or those of their teachers, to become bland corporate mouthpieces, since they recognised that something would be lost.

Twitter has, though, exacerbated the level of public scrutiny leaders are under as they go about their roles. As Gronn puts it (op.cit p.182), leaders are subject to

increased visibility [and a] greater likelihood that one will be the object of scorn or criticism, and yet all the time the feeling of being constrained to pretend that all is well and to try and keep up appearances

creates a tension deepened by the voyeurism that a life lived online invites.

### Practical implications

As with most things in life, the more you put in, the more you get out. I found that those leaders who had embedded the use of Twitter into their workflows reaped enormous benefits, benefits that far outweighed the negatives. The lurkers, or those only using the platform to post the 3rd XI hockey results, are missing a trick.

If you are new to Twitter I suggest the following specific points.

**Don't worry too much about your audience.** Your followership will grow as you do. Leaders who restrict their voice too much can either sound parochial (just school sports results) or self-aggrandising (a stream of *bon mots* on the latest educational issues). The beauty of Twitter is its ability to connect various audiences in new and unexpected ways. A tweet about a family cycle trip might spark a connection with a teacher cyclist in Chile, say, who sends you an interesting article on school finance...

**Don't chase followers.** I found, during the course of my research, that meaningful two-way conversations with fellow tweachers only occur with about 150 discrete individuals, *no matter how large your followership*. This is instructive – chasing followers will not markedly increase the number of people you interact with on a day-to-day basis.

In this sense, my findings mirror those of Dunbar who found that meaningful human relationships, whether mediated on or offline, have a relatively small upper limit. Let your account grow organically.

**Be yourself.** Leaders are naturally concerned that what they say online might come back to haunt them, but, in my experience, honesty and a willingness to show your true self invites reciprocation. My rule of thumb has always been not to post something I wouldn't want my mum to

see (she is more puritanical than most!) but beyond that I am my authentic self. I would encourage you to be too.

**Use lists.** Before long you'll start to become overwhelmed with the volume of information streaming down your timeline and will run the risk of missing the wood for the trees. A useful way around this is to use lists to slice and dice the various categories of people you follow. If there are individuals you routinely find have useful or interesting things to say about a particular topic, make a list for that topic. You'll save an awful lot of time and be more efficient at surfacing valuable material.

**Build up a stable of people you follow.** When you first join it's difficult to know where to begin. It's worth having a look at some other people's suggestions, but don't be too constrained by these. Probably the biggest cheese in the UK Twittersphere – @teachertoolkit – regularly posts lists of tweachers to follow on his blog and this is as good a place as any to start. Searching Twitter for specific keywords, for example, can throw up people who fall outside the standard UK education 'Twitterati'.

**Interact.** It can be tempting just to 'lurk' – and you can still get a lot out of Twitter by being entirely passive – but I've found that by giving as well as taking you'll unlock a whole new level of utility. One way of getting involved in a safe and relatively structured way is to involve yourself in one of the numerous hashtag(#) chats that occur throughout the week on a range of topics to do with education.

**Always be gracious.** If you use Twitter to its full potential it won't be long before you come across someone you disagree with. This can be a good thing – several of my respondents remarked how their thinking had changed on a given issue thanks to the persuasive arguments of others online. But it's easy to come across as dismissive or rude when constrained to just 140 characters. Go out of your way to be magnanimous and conciliatory, even towards people you profoundly disagree with. At the very least, agree to disagree and move on. Life is too short to do otherwise.

**Turn it off from time to time!** Many of my respondents were aware of the addictive nature of Twitter and its ability to disrupt the flow of their other work with constant mini-interruptions. Leaders need to develop their own systems to guard against this. My own method is to catch up with Twitter in concentrated bursts and to discipline myself not to check for updates at other times.

*Tim Jefferis is deputy head (academic) at Oswestry School.*

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# 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)  
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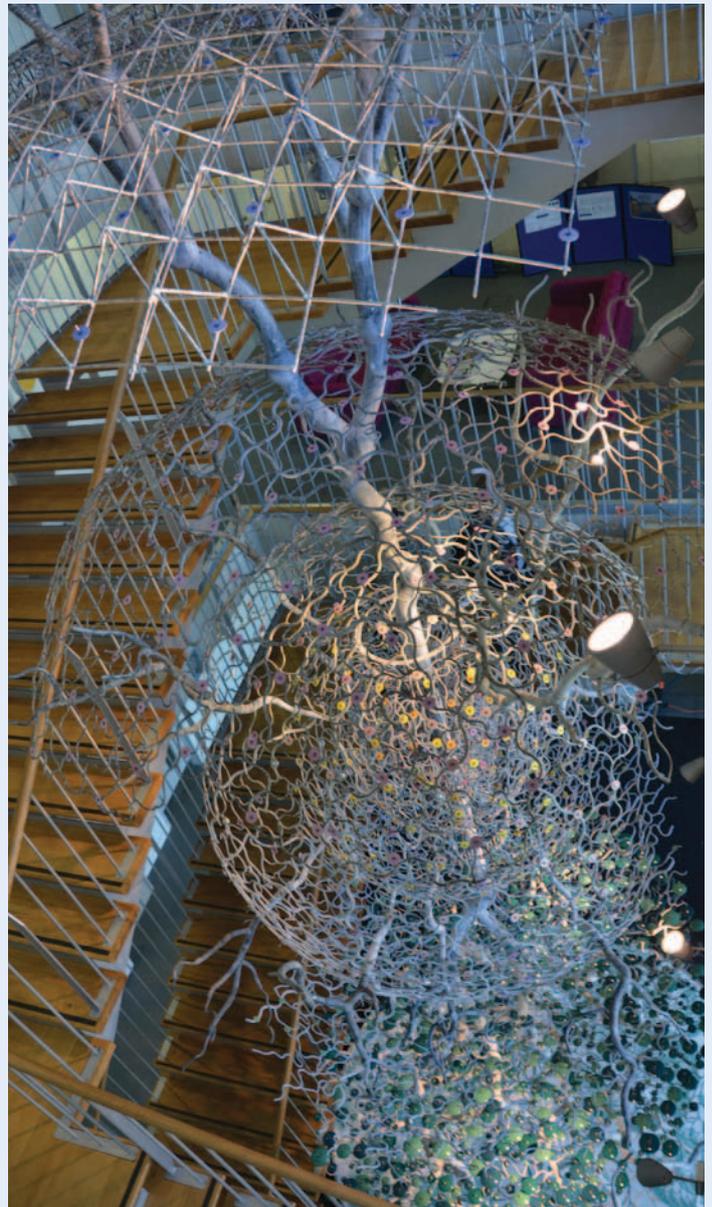
## Abingdon's new sculpture

The Science Fusion Tower, a stunning sculpture made from recycled zinc coated steel and enamel and standing 10m tall, now spans the three floors of Abingdon School's new Yang Science Centre. This intricate design, combining art and science, rises through the stairwell, illustrating themes from biology then physics and finally chemistry on the corresponding floors of the building, which was opened in October 2015.

On the ground floor, a network of mangrove tree roots touch down onto a unique depiction of the evolutionary Tree of Life. The middle section becomes physics with a sculptural interpretation of the Tokamak fusion reactor with its plasma gas layers and hot plasma flares. Chemistry is represented by a canopy of hexagons in the structure of graphene, under which is the unit cell structure found in diamonds.

Matthew Lane Sanderson's sculpture was made possible by a donation from former pupil Martin Iredale and his family. Speaking about the sculpture when he won the commission, Matthew said: "Standing as tall as a three-storey house and over a ton in weight, this sculpture could be considered big! Whilst its purpose and obvious presence will be clear, it holds some secrets also. Semi-transparent and with no solid volumes, there are some conceptual 'keys to life' within the structure and discernible for those who are prepared to find them.

"By identifying these keys, and linking them to each other, I hope all who visit the science centre may enjoy both the visual and cerebral challenge presented for years to come. It is my aim not merely to decorate a building but to inspire many generations of pupils to take up the challenges of science at Abingdon."





# From Weymouth to Wellingborough – a band of brothers

Neil Lyon recalls one of the institutional casualties of World War Two

At a time when most schools are commemorating their fallen in both world wars, it is worth remembering that the HMC lost two of its own members during the last War.

Weymouth College in Dorset was the first casualty. Founded in 1862, the school closed its gates for the final time in 1940. Two years later Imperial Service College in Windsor folded as well, merging with Haileybury. In November 2015, 75 years after its closure, the Old Boys of Weymouth College held their final reunion, and this article is written as a tribute to their story.

Weymouth was founded on the edge of the Dorset seaside town by an 'outstanding protagonist of pronounced evangelicalism'. This was Rev Talbot Greaves, a Weymouth vicar remembered by parishioners for his one-hour sermons each Sunday morning, and he became the first chairman of the governors.

The founding Headmaster was Rev John Ellis, previously on the staff at Marlborough and latterly of Salisbury Cathedral School, who led the school from 1863 to 1879. From the outset the school welcomed boarders as well as dayboys, and pupil numbers rose to 100 within a decade. But the tide

turned and, worse still, the Headmaster and the chairman of governors became terminally estranged.

Ellis fell out with Greaves in 1874 when he decided that the pupils should no longer attend Sunday worship at Greaves's church in the town centre of Weymouth, but instead go to a newly built church much nearer to the school. Greaves took offence and did not speak to Ellis for the next three years. Ellis must have antagonised other members of the board, since all the governors were conspicuous by their absence at the prize giving ceremonies in 1876 and 1877.

Ellis then publicly accused some governors of being corrupt, which was the last straw. The governors invited him to resign, but he refused and so they sacked him. He denied the validity of this dismissal and refused to hand over the school premises, which forced the governors to issue (costly) proceedings in the High Court to recover possession of the site. Ellis lost the case and finally left the school in 1879!

His successor, Rev Charles Gilbert, formerly on the staff of Derby Grammar School and an Old Rugbeian, lasted just five years, before overreaching himself with one severe

*Weymouth College.*





flogging too many, being invited by the governors to resign in 1885. The school history, written in 1937 by one of Gilbert's former pupils, Charles Falkner, recalls how, on his first day as Headmaster, Gilbert failed to turn up for assembly at 9am. 'The head boy, being told to look for him, found him on his knees in the lecture room, manifestly looking for guidance from above in his new duties'.

The history also describes Gilbert's besetting sin. 'The Headmaster was subject to sudden fits of temper, and discipline was then as fitful as an April day. Punishment was dealt with in the form of severe floggings on the back with the cane. No one grumbled at the fortune of war, but everyone resented the continual punishment of trivial offences by flogging. Rumours began to spread tales outside the school' ... and the matter was reported to the governors. Gilbert was allowed to resign before he was pushed. Then Weymouth entered its golden age. With still barely 100 pupils, between 1885 and 1892 it ranked among the top 50 schools in the country for the number of Oxbridge scholarships. Yet the school could never establish a strong financial footing, and in 1902 it was sold to the evangelical Church Schools Trust, which also ran Dean Close School in Cheltenham and Trent College in Long Eaton.

For the next 38 years Weymouth staggered on, a public school in miniature, with low numbers and yet producing a steady flow of Oxbridge scholars. Many pupils were the sons of impoverished evangelical clergy or missionaries, often on reduced fees. It continued to attract a steady flow of local dayboys as well as boarders, but remained in poor financial health. Paradoxically several new schools were established in Dorset in the inter-war period, such as Bryanston and Canford, so it is too simplistic just to blame Weymouth's rocky fortunes on the Depression. There must have been something fatally wrong with its business model.

The outbreak of war in 1939 was the final nail in the coffin for Weymouth. The naval base at nearby Portland was a likely target for heavy bombing raids, but there is no evidence that

the school had put any evacuation plans in place. A suspicion would long linger among old boys that the outbreak was simply the excuse the Church Schools Trust had been waiting for to offload this unprofitable school from their books. At the HMC conference in January 1940, it was announced that Weymouth College would close for good at Easter.

The Headmaster of Wellingborough School in Northamptonshire promptly made contact and invited Weymouth to consider coming *en masse* to the midlands. Weymouth entered into discussions with more local HMC schools at the same time but, crucially, Wellingborough offered to allow the Weymouth boys to come as a whole and establish their own house, rather than be split up amongst existing houses.

The offer was accepted and, in May 1940, some 33 boys formed Weymouth House at Wellingborough under their former deputy head, Tom Nevill (whose elder brother, Wilfred, is remembered for kicking the football over the trenches on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916).

Weymouth's loss was Wellingborough's gain. But for the outbreak of war, Weymouth might have survived and Wellingborough might have closed. Pupil numbers at the latter had been falling for more than a decade and by 1939 several governors were pinning the blame on the Wellingborough Headmaster, Albert Billen.

Just as the Weymouth contingent arrived, an internicine war broke out at Wellingborough. A motion to dismiss Billen was passed by ten of the 15 governors and the saga hit the national press, with attacks on the 'Hitlerish governors'. There was even dark talk of Billen's successor being blackballed by the HMC but, in a stroke of wisdom, the governors replaced Billen with Weymouth's Tom Nevill.

Nevill was no doubt helped by another numerical transfusion, when boys from a Norfolk prep school joined under their Headmaster, Robert Britten (whose pacifist younger brother, Benjamin, was later to compose the *War Requiem*).

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*Dulce et decorum est.*



# World War One week by week

David Hargreaves introduces an on-going project

The treatment of The Great War by James Hilton in *Goodbye Mr Chips* offers a few historical vignettes all of its own.

Chips, who had retired honourably in 1913, found himself back in post after a glut of younger men on the staff of Brookfield joined up. Charteris, the Headmaster, died shortly afterwards and the governors invited Chips to fill the top post 'for the duration'. So he did, and impressed some of his younger pupils by his imperturbability when he continued to construe Virgil in the middle of a Zeppelin raid.

Perhaps he dreaded more the greater public exposure when, each Sunday in school chapel, he forced himself to read the names of Brookfieldians whose names had appeared in the latest casualty lists. Often he wept. Hilton, attuned to the ways of a generation less sentimental than our own, makes the point that his pupils might have despised anyone else for this show of weakness.

Which of us today would not also have shed bitter tears? In the course of a longish teaching career, I have often wondered how an earlier generation of teachers, faced for four and half years by an annual exodus of school leavers into Flanders, found the stomach to keep going. Most cared deeply for their pupils and those who did not enlist themselves were usually incapacitated by age (like Chips) or ill-health (like Charteris). They must have found the new orthodoxy – that the new

destiny of young and fit school-leavers was to fight and to die – an insupportable sorrow.

In August 2014, I was commissioned to write a weekly essay about the First World War by Robert Cottrell, editor of *The Browser* (an online compilation of the best articles and essays from all over the world – see [www.thebrowser.com](http://www.thebrowser.com) <<http://www.thebrowser.com>>). Robert's particular genius was to suggest that each essay should confine itself, in the most interesting way possible, to the events of the same week, exactly 100 years earlier. Nearly two years later, over 80 essays have been completed and over 200,000 words have been written.

That rather scary figure rather obscures the more prosaic reality that each essay is a little under 3000 words, but we have adhered to Robert's guiding principle: the focus is always on the events of the previous seven days exactly 100 years ago.

Thanks to the exceptional research skills of Margaret-Louise O'Keeffe, we are able to draw upon the lives of those intimately involved in the great events of the time, however luminous or obscure they may be. We view grand strategy, high politics and diplomacy, through the prism of individuals – people of all kinds, all classes, all tastes. Letters and literature, sex and crime, food and fashion – we try to cover them all, and much more besides.

What results each week is a series of compelling stories with some overarching ideas. We hope very much that these will recommend themselves to many school and university students, and to their teachers. The essays can be viewed online, free of charge, at <http://www.centurymagazine.co.uk> and a flavour of what they're about can be gleaned in this extract from 'The Human Chain' – the name given to a recent essay covering the week of 15-21 February 1916.

Honouring those whom war had propelled to an early grave is not a task which recommends itself to posterity, especially since the conventions of the time dictated that honour could be accorded only to one's own countrymen and allies. Even Edith Appleton – the soul of independence as well as of courage and compassion – conformed to this illogical and unforgiving dictum without obvious difficulty. Her diary on 20 February related:

One poor young fellow, only 24, died after four hours from deadly gas gangrene, and another had his leg off at once to save the same thing happening. He is such a nice man, with a wife and six children—I so hope he will do well. One man tells me that the Station Master and our driver at Pop[eringhe] have been shot as spies. Good luck! The more the better—the place is riddled with spy vermin.

The passage of a century has allowed a later generation to confront the universal truth that any life cut short by war constitutes a terrible sorrow. Anyone inclined to doubt that might consider the words of a young German soldier, Private Otto Heinebach, penned on 18th February, in what he knew might be a last letter home:

In the dressing-room dug-out, where we are all lying for a day in reserve, it is stiflingly hot. The place is crammed with men. Outside it is raining as usual. A little while ago we heard that the attack has again been postponed for twenty-four hours, and just now came word that it was fixed for the 20th. That seems to be the final decision, though there is no sign of any improvement in the weather. Packs are to be worn, but everything not absolutely necessary is to be left behind.

I say goodbye to you, my dear parents and brothers and sisters. Thanks, most tender thanks, for all that you have done for me. If I fall, I earnestly beg of you to bear it with fortitude. Reflect that I should probably never have achieved complete happiness and contentment. And so, in imagination, I extinguish the lamp of my existence on the eve of this terrible battle. I cut myself out of the circle of which I have formed a beloved part. The gap which I leave must be closed; the human chain must be unbroken. I, who once formed a small link in it, bless it for all eternity. And till your last days remember me, I beg you, with tender love. Honour my memory without gilding it, and cherish me in your loving faithful hearts.

The following day, Heinebach was seriously wounded when a French shell landed on his trench. He would spend six months in a military hospital in Frankfurt before dying of his wounds in September.

*David Hargreaves was a housemaster at Westminster School where he taught history from 1986 to 2014, and now runs the educational consultancy DHC – London.*

## HERE & THERE

### Sisters for sisters

An exhibition by students at The Mount School investigating the lives of a number of women who died during service in the First World War and are commemorated under York Minster's Five Sisters' Window is on public display at York Castle Museum.

"The girls were fascinated to learn about the life stories of women like Nellie Spindler, who was born in Wakefield in 1892, served as a staff nurse in France and died in 1917 after the hospital she was working in was shelled; or Elsie Impey, who had herself been a student at The Mount and died after guiding castaways to safety on lifeboats" said Helen Snelson, head of history at the all-girl Quaker school.

The window, which dates from 1260, was one of many removed during the First World War for fear of bomb damage. It was restored and reinstalled in 1924, thanks to the fundraising efforts of a group of York women, led by Helen Little who, according to the York Minster factsheet, 'reported having a vision of her long-dead sisters beckoning her towards the window'.

As Helen Snelson points out, "The memorial of the Five Sisters' Window is unique in that it commemorates women from all walks of life, whether they were nurses, munitions workers, canteen ladies, Red Cross or others from across the entire Empire."

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.



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# Clarendon condensed

Tom Wheare reviews *Two Cheers for Dr Arnold – A study in Nineteenth Century Headmasters* by Robert Stanier and Leslie Wilson

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Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* was published in 1918 after a long period of gestation for so slight a work. It caught a readership profoundly disenchanted with the old world and the leaders who had led them into the catastrophe of World War; and its debunking tone appealed to the fashioners of the new *zeitgeist*.

Strachey's next book, *Queen Victoria*, confirmed his reputation as a gadfly with an elegant sting, though that had lost its potency and its precision by the time of his last book *Portraits in Miniature*. Despite Strachey's light touch, which skimmed rather than plumbed the Victorian deeps, he paved the way for a new kind of biography and a revisionist attitude to the heroes of the past.

Nevertheless, Dr Arnold, one of the four eminent Victorians Strachey so thoroughly debunked, remains a mighty peak in the mountainous range of Victorian Headmasters that still casts its shadow over education in this country. Arnold, Benson, Thring and Sanderson transformed their schools and with them the men (and they were, of course, all men) who led Great Britain when people still believed there was a meaning in those two words. *Two Cheers for Dr Arnold* is a delightful ramble through this elevated terrain, with the report of the Clarendon Commission as its guidebook and the phenomena popularly associated with public schools – flogging, fagging, sex and sermons – worth, as Baedeker might note, a visit.

Clarendon himself had not attended one of the public schools his Commission was reviewing, instead entering St John's College, Cambridge, at the age of 16 and then proceeding fairly rapidly into the diplomatic corps. This may, perhaps, account for his interest in the teaching of French, a line of questioning which plainly puzzled The Headmaster of Eton. Whilst Dr Balston felt that the language might be regarded as one of the necessary accomplishments of an English gentleman, and whilst the recently deceased Prince Consort himself had endowed a scholarship in the subject, he did not think it necessary to devote any part of school time to it.

Q You do not think it is a matter which a boy should be required to learn?

A He ought to learn French before he came to Eton, and we could take measures to keep it up as we keep up English.

Q What measures would you take to keep up French, and I may also add, what measures do you now take to keep up English?

A There are none at present, except through the ancient languages.

Classics teachers continued to teach English to Etonians until the late 1950s when an English graduate was finally appointed. Their success in 'keeping the subject up' may be measured by a roll call that includes George Orwell, Lord David Cecil, Cyril Connolly, Michael Holroyd, Anthony Powell, Aldous Huxley – and Ian Fleming.

Nor was Clarendon any more orthodox in his thinking about punishment. Whereas Wolsey had argued that

tender youth is to suffer neither severe thrashings nor sour and threatening looks, nor any kind of tyranny; for by such usage the fire of genius is either extinguished, or in a great measure damped,

the prevailing wisdom in the centuries that followed his fall had been expressed by Dr Johnson with characteristic trenchancy.

I would rather, said he, have the rod to be the general terror to all, to make them learn, than tell a child if you do thus or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters.

Gladstone described the 'roar of cheering ... like the huge waves at Biarritz' that greeted the name (and person) of Keate, justly famed for his gargantuan capacity for flogging, at the dinner celebrating Eton's quatercentenary. Clarendon wondered whether more use might be made of 'lines', not written out, for that would tend to spoil the handwriting, but learnt and then recited by the boys to the masters who had had cause to punish them. Butler of Harrow dissented.

I should observe on that, first of all, that I question the accuracy of that inference as a whole, that it does affect or spoil the handwriting of the boys. I see enough of the system to know that in the under-forms, where punishments are necessarily much more frequent, it would be quite intolerable for the master to have them learnt by heart.

Q I am afraid the system is rather more having in view the convenience of the masters rather than the good of the boys?

A The convenience of the masters means the time of the masters, and the time of the masters is the advantage of the boys.

Although attendance at Chapel was a major feature of the Victorian boarding school, and although most of the great Headmasters were clergymen, Thring was not alone in thinking that 'nothing is more fatal to a school than obtrusive religion'.

Although the celebrant emerging from the vestry to ask the congregation whether any of them happened to have a corkscrew about them was probably not a schoolmaster, who would surely have had his own, the Church of England presented the Oxford Movement with a great many easy



EDWARD THRING  
HEAD MASTER 1853-1887

*Thring of Uppingham.*

targets for reform. But their approach, or that of the serial school founder Nathaniel Woodard, would not have met with approval from the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos who was celebrated for being 'religious without enthusiasm'.

Chapel was essential in making sure whether pupils were actually in school, on Sundays especially. Masters checking attendance in Chapel was still a feature of services at Eton in the 1970s. Perhaps that was why Dr Butler was observed sharpening a pencil during a Sunday service. The visiting bishop, an Old Salopian, no doubt took great pleasure in issuing an episcopal reproof to his former Headmaster.

On the other hand, one of the best attested features of the Victorian public school was the mesmeric and transformative preaching of the greatest Heads. They knew what they were about. Arnold wrote 'My object will be, if possible, to form Christian men, for Christian boys I can scarcely hope to make'. His sermons created a steadily improving moral atmosphere at Rugby and made an impression on many of his pupils that remained in after life.

Moberley of Winchester was famed for his silvery, distinct tones and his sermons greatly preferred to those of any other preacher. Vaughan at Harrow, Bradley at Marlborough and Temple at Rugby are other members of the pantheon of the pulpit.

This mixed economy of the mundane and the inspirational certainly produced a great many clergymen, not a few of whom were Headmasters and some of whom, such as Sewell of Radley, founded schools themselves. Their spiritual qualities were not, however, always matched by financial competence. This might, in theory, have been supplied by the governors.

The Fellows of Eton, for instance, showed a keen monetary awareness when they kept to themselves the 'fines' accruing when leases were extended. In 1818 their official annual stipend, deriving from 'rent', was £50, whilst 'fines' brought them as much as an extra £1000 a year. But an expertise in making the most of their statutory emoluments, shared in one form or another by the governing bodies of a good many ancient foundations, did not necessarily result in good financial management of their schools.

Heads were allowed to continue drawing their salaries even when there were no pupils in the school, whilst the obvious source of willing scholars, the local boys, was often ignored. Even when day pupils were acknowledged, some leading schools such as Rugby, Harrow and Tonbridge set up separate establishments, named after their founders, which still flourish today.

Although William of Wykeham had implicitly expressed his doubts about mankind in general and the fellows of his college in particular by writing statutes of very great length and detail, the Warden of Winchester still enjoyed his 80 gallons of free beer each week.

Benson, the first Master of Wellington College, despaired of his 'Governing Body without an expert among them – powerful people attending to a school for two hours twice a year.' C M Cox, the Headmaster of Berkhamsted, would not have seen that as a drawback. 'If a master makes an unreasonable request to me, I just say, "My dear chap, the governors would never hear of it"; and I make sure they never do.'

Berkhamsted was the school the two authors of this delightful book attended and Wadham their Oxford College. R S Stanier, the prime mover, was Master of Magdalen College



School from 1944 to 1967, and he observed his fellow Heads with some degree of wry amusement. He would certainly have recognised Victorian throwbacks amongst his contemporaries.

For their part, the great and the good of HMC were puzzled by a Head who was a founding member of CND and yet, on both sides, there was deep mutual respect. *Two cheers for Dr Arnold* is a book full of lessons for the contemporary school leader and the report of the Clarendon Commission would be equally valuable to the politicians who have so much to learn about how to give children a good education.

It is not as if Clarendon had better material to work with than any 21st century education minister, characterising his fellow commissioners thus: 'Devon is weak, Northcote pedantic, Thompson idle, Twistleton quirky, Vaughan mad'. Nevertheless, they produced a staggeringly comprehensive *tour d'horison* of the schools they had chosen to review. As Stanier puts it

The Commissioners' report which took some three years to emerge, is a remarkable document, and, thanks to it, one can surely say that there is no subject in the whole of British history about which more is known than the public schools of the mid 19th century. The Commissioners received lengthy evidence, written and oral, from hundreds, if not thousands, of witnesses – headmasters, assistant masters, provosts, wardens, deans, parents, governors, big boys, small boys, old boys, military and naval officers, university fellows and tutors, heads of colleges, the Prussian government, and interested members of the public – and the final result was a document of some 2,000,000 words (twice the length of the Bible). In spite of Lord Clarendon's remarks about some of his colleagues, no one can read it without being impressed by the care, thoroughness, open-mindedness and sincerity with which the work was done.

*Tom Wheare was a pupil at Magdalen College School from 1958 to 1963.*

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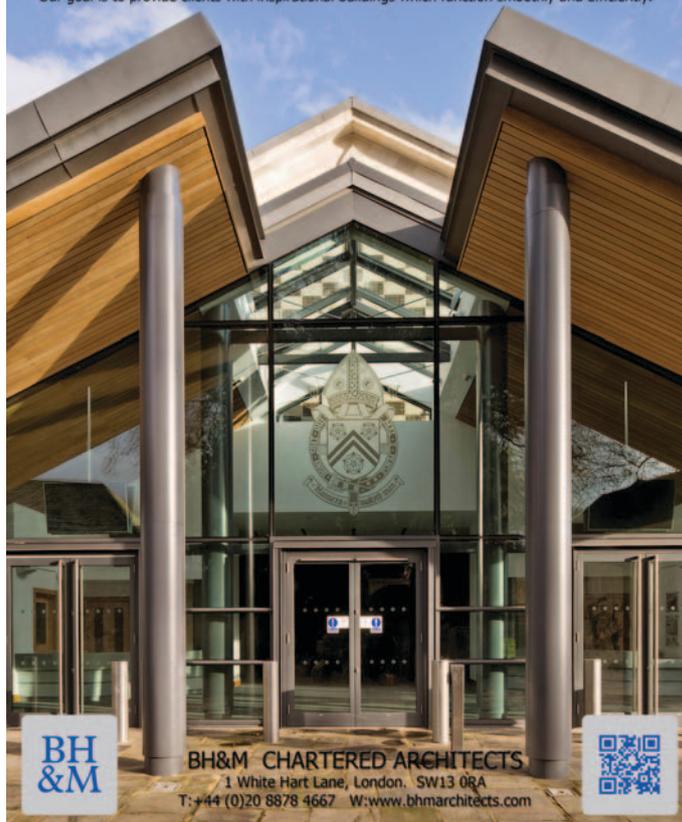
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# Letter from America

Jason Morrow reports from New York City

My first New York winter has been and gone and, as I was reminded dozens of times by parents at morning drop off, I have been lucky to enjoy such a mild one. Mild wasn't always the first word that came to mind, especially the weekend it dropped to minus 25° Celsius. The bulk of the snow did, however, arrive with great consideration over a weekend in one spectacular 'snow event' which deposited a little over 28 inches on the city.

The blizzard transformed Manhattan for 36 magical hours into a vehicle free zone, creating many dramatic photo opportunities and brief friendships with other intrepid explorer-residents who couldn't resist venturing out to stroll down the middle of Fifth Avenue without having to join a parade.

No doubt to the surprise and disappointment of many students (and perhaps even one or two staff), such was the efficiency of the city's snow clearing operation that school buses were running as normal by Monday morning and Manhattan schools were able to open with minimal disruption. The need for layers and very robust footwear for those arriving on foot did necessitate a fairly loose interpretation of uniform for the next week, but otherwise it was remarkable what little impact two and a half foot of snow had on the running of the school.

The last term followed a very similar pattern to a typical spring term in the UK, not least in how busy it became as we battled to schedule all the usual range of events and activities in two very short half terms. The February holiday had a slightly grander title than half term, however, as it is called the Presidents' Day Break, since it coincides with the national holiday to celebrate former Presidents.

This holiday also gave us a good chance as a school to explore and reflect on the achievements, qualities and legacies of the two Presidents primarily honoured in this holiday – Washington and Lincoln. Both figures offer ample material for assemblies and student reflection on honesty, integrity, difficult choices and struggling to do the right thing.

Such discussions also inevitably touched on the current presidential campaign and had both students and staff musing in an entirely non-partisan fashion on the character and possible legacy of the main contenders vying to be the next President. It has not always been easy to help frame the discussions in an entirely positive manner, because the tone, language and venom of some of the debates and speeches have been quite shocking and not always great role model material. It is hard to persuade a combative Year 8 debate team that it is better to rely on quality of argument and evidence rather than reductionist misrepresentations of your opponents' position and cheap jibes, when precisely those techniques seem to work for those seeking the highest office in the land.

There have also been particular challenges in a diverse international school community to have such a strong undercurrent playing on the fear of others and emphasis on what makes us different, rather than what we might



have in common. I overheard an extended discussion in the playground among our Year 2 students as to whether or not they were 'from the USA' and what it meant anyhow if you were or were not American. Part of me loved the fact that they were picking up on a strand of the national election and striving to make sense of it, but another part shared the widespread concern that some of the inflammatory campaign assertions could generate real anxiety or fear among young children.

There has also been a decidedly unreal feel to much of the 2016 campaign as all the nativist rhetoric and posturing seems so very alien to the realities of New York City. One of the pleasant surprises of relocating to the city is how rapidly one is viewed and treated as a New Yorker, as that is so different from the mentality in many other regions or cities which seem to require a person to live there for a decade or more before they have any chance of being considered a local.

It has also been curious in this election that having both leading contenders for their respective Party's nomination with such strong links to New York is not generating the type of enthusiasm or support one normally finds for 'home state' candidates. As the campaign continues over the summer, one can only hope for a less divisive and confrontational next

## Endpiece

phase, even if the prospects of that currently seem slim.

One of the highlights of the past term was the celebration of International Book Week in March. This has always been a most enjoyable week to be in schools, but it was inspiring this year to see such a high level of parental engagement with events across the school. A Parents' Association-organized brunch the Sunday before the main events in school was particularly memorable and helped set the week off to a great start. As I arrived at the appropriately named Books of Wonder store just off Union Square at around 11am on the Sunday, I wasn't quite sure what to expect.

I was amazed to find about 150 children and parents enjoying the occasion – sharing new books, recommending old favourites to friends or younger siblings and listening to author readings. The love for reading on display that morning remained evident throughout the following week and it was very pleasing to see the proportion of children arriving off the bus each morning with their nose buried in a book rise sharply.

Another fun feature of the week was 'Poem in my pocket', whereby all students and staff were encouraged to carry a favourite poem around with them all week which others could then ask them to share at break or lunch. The students enjoyed this so much that the older years are going to have a similar style 'Sonnet in my satchel' for the School Shakespeare Day in April.

There is rightly a great deal of focus and investment in a wide array of new technologies to promote learning in schools and to encourage students to create as well as consume such material. It was, however, incredibly uplifting to see a school community so enthused and energised by what arguably remains the most awesome and transformative of human innovations – the written word.

I continue to be particularly intrigued by features of a New York school which are familiar, but have a distinct twist on practices to which I was more accustomed in the UK. An event on the calendar which caught my eye last summer, and which I have been anticipating all year, finally arrived in March when lessons finished early one Wednesday for the Student-led Parent Conferences that afternoon.

Colleagues had explained the basic format and rationale and I was eager to see the event in action as our students from Reception to Year 9 spent 20 to 30 minutes with their parents talking them through their books and portfolios to share what

they had learned, topics they had especially enjoyed and areas which they were still finding a challenge. It was only in observing the conferences first hand that I was able to appreciate fully their potential and to see a number of children grow visibly in confidence and understanding by sharing their work with their parents.

The value of the process was also reflected in the very high level of parent attendance and engagement, and it was great to hear over the ensuing weeks about a number of visits or family activities that had arisen from discussions at the conference. The conferences were also a very powerful reminder and demonstration that students are generally acutely aware of how they are doing in their studies and how they are perceived to be doing by teachers and parents.

This produced a very fruitful discussion at a subsequent staff meeting on the importance of fostering and modelling a growth mindset approach with students. There is often broad consensus on the arguments of Carol Dweck for the benefits of adopting a growth rather than fixed mindset approach to students' learning, but it can be a challenge to maintain this in the midst of busy school life.

Too often passing comments on 'low ability' or 'weak' students can slip into a professional dialogue on the false assumption that it would never be communicated to the child. In my experience students rarely miss the signals of lowered expectations or think their teachers have a higher opinion of their ability than they do. This is equally true whether one is dealing with exam grade predictions and university applications or first steps into reading and early ventures in mathematics.

Avoiding such careless talk remains an important challenge for all teachers and success in doing so would, I suspect, result in many children achieving and thriving in ways others had perhaps not expected. Optimism about what an individual may achieve and championing a 'can do' ethos often seems to sit more comfortably with the American mindset, and I am sure there are significant benefits from this for self-confidence and self-awareness. It is certainly an aspect of working in an international British school in the USA which seems to help produce very happy, articulate and considerate students.

*Jason Morrow, formerly Head of Norwich High School for Girls (GDST), has been Headmaster of the British International School of New York since September 2015.*

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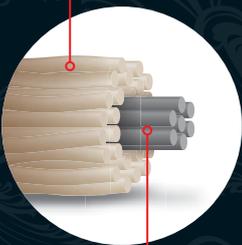
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