



# **OL Newsletter**

**TRINITY 2019**

# WELCOME

## A message from **JOHN WATSON**

### New Headmaster of Leicester Grammar School and CEO of Leicester Grammar School Trust

**J**ohn Watson joined the Trust at the beginning of the Trinity Term 2019. He has a first class degree in Classics and Modern Languages (Latin and French) from Hertford College, Oxford. He occupied middle leadership roles at Sevenoaks School and Millfield before becoming Deputy Head of Trinity School in Croydon. Since 2006, he has been Headmaster of Bablake in Coventry, a happy and successful

co-educational independent school for 1100 pupils aged 3-18. He chairs HMC's Professional Development Sub-committee and in this role directs training for all of HMC's new headteachers. He is also an Independent Schools Inspector. He is married to Shirley, who is a senior leader at King's High School in Warwick, and their two children are training to be a lawyer and primary school teacher. John's interests

include the Arts (especially theatre), walking, cycling, gardening, travel and DIY. He is not (yet) a Leicester City supporter.

John has the following message for the OL community:

I am really looking forward to leading this extraordinary school and the LGS Trust from strength to strength. I hope that, as alumni, you are very proud members of a relatively young



Photo by Mark Woodward

school community which, from very small beginnings in 1981, has rapidly become one of the top co-educational independent schools nationally. There is a palpable sense of ambition in a school which cherishes traditional values, but which is very much turned towards the future, preparing children to adapt to a constantly changing world. Alongside that ambition for children to achieve and be the best they can, we should be determined to provide outstanding opportunities both within and beyond the classroom: the sport, music, drama, co-curricular activities and trips which you loved as students are hugely important in moulding our children as naturally self-confident human beings. LGS should be an exciting place to learn, where children live life to the full and where, in the words of Aristotle, "Excellence is not an act but a habit".

## "EXCELLENCE IS NOT AN ACT BUT A HABIT"

I like the Good Schools Guide's description of the school: "well-rounded, confident but not arrogant". I like the richly diverse character of the school community. Yes, it is a privileged environment, but it is also a 'grounded' school, from where students emerge as generous and well-rounded young adults, who will make a positive difference to the world in which they live. This stems in part from strong relationships between students and a highly qualified teaching and support staff, whose common purpose is to give children the best possible start in life. Artificial Intelligence will play an important

role in all our futures, but it will never replace the lively and productive dynamic of a creative classroom. I hope to do my best for my staff and to bring the best out of them, in their love of working with young people and valuing the potential of every individual.

My educational watchwords are: 'high expectations' (as much of who children turn out to be as of what they achieve); 'opportunity'; and 'community'. The last one is the most important of all, as we should aim to build community every day – through the values we espouse and cherish as a school, through the role-modelling of staff and senior pupils and through the ways in which we support and inspire each other.

I have always hugely enjoyed getting to know the alumni of Bablake (a few years older, with an alleged foundation date of 1344!) and I hope to meet you all soon.

## FAREWELL

# Best wishes to all our leaving staff



**Adele Hillier**  
Head of RS Dixie Grammar School



**Alison Shakespeare**  
Bursar The Perse School



**Carole Kidd**  
Retirement



**Allan Higginson**  
Retirement



**Joe Allen**  
Head of PE Oundle



**Fred Clayton**  
Retirement



**Saskia Proffitt**  
Returning to studies



**Sue Faire**  
Retirement

# FAREWELL

## RETIRING STAFF

LGS thanks these retiring heads of department for their inspirational teaching and dedicated service over many years.



### Tony Duffield

**T**ony joined LGS as Head of Biology in 1991 and proceeded to build the thriving, popular department we have today.

Generations of students will testify to his enthusiastic and extraordinarily knowledgeable teaching. He has instilled the importance of learning through practical work into students and colleagues alike. The department's resources for lab practicals are excellent but his real passion is ecological field work.

He has helped run and provided resources for residential trips for Prep, Year 7 and Year 9 pupils. Worthy of particular note are the legendary sixth form field trips that he has led, to Betws-y-Coed in Snowdonia in the early years and latterly to the Cherbourg Peninsula in Normandy. Happy days! There will be many, many OLs who are grateful for his passionate teaching, and who may well have been inspired by him to pursue studies and careers in the life sciences. His students and his colleagues have always come first. He will put aside whatever else he is doing and give as much time as it takes to deal with any queries whatever they may be, ranging from academic issues to UCAS applications (especially for Medicine).

Tony is a one-off. Those of us remaining have a very difficult act to follow.

Mr Berry would also like to thank him for his help and support in the early years of the Year 9 trips to Strasbourg and Normandy and who could forget the enormous picnics for 80 people that he seemed to conjure up, seemingly with little effort!

Christina Fearon, Biology Department



### Robert Kidd

**W**hen I was asked to 'write an article' about Mr Kidd and his impending retirement I was in something of a quandary – how do you write about someone you have worked with for over twenty years? In all of that time he will have taught a thousand heads, met a thousand sets of parents, written thousands of reports, and scratched his head about how to keep it all fresh. How can one short article do justice to that?

The answer seemed more straightforward than I thought. Actually, anyone reading this who has been taught or tutored by Robert already knows anything that I might say. To those who were not, anything I might say will be meaningless, even though he will have had an influence on you through the rest of the department. You know if he entertained you, marked your essays with more annotation than you wrote in the actual essay because he wanted to maintain the conversation about your work, and if you actually read those words, you knew that he was giving you his time.

He came from Giggleswick via Wolverhampton Grammar in the dark early days of the English department at LGS and helped to transform it into the thriving hub it is today (I say this as the next incumbent who has to follow on). When I arrived in 1996 there was no English office, no central store (apart from a book cupboard near Room 1, and nowhere near the teaching rooms), and I spent the first term of my LGS career teaching out of a bag in the old staffroom. When we moved into the new St Katharine's building with all of its facilities a new opportunity for the department opened up which I think we grasped. Robert must take much of the credit for that too.

The department is where it is today because of him, and where he steered all of us, and as he leaves to move on to new challenges and new opportunities he can be sure, like a certain Shakespearean king, that he leaves a little touch of Robert in the night. His legacy is a great one and we all wish him well.

Julian Griffin, Head of English Designate



# Weddings

Eloise Barker [OL'09]  
& Will Williams [OL'09]



Ruth Duffield [OL'05] &  
Carl Moorhouse [OL'05]

Jess Harris (now Kirby), Ryan Buckingham,  
Ruth Duffield (now Moorhouse), Curtis  
Castledine, Carl Moorhouse, Ellie Brewin  
(now Webster), Sam Duffield, Katy  
Langrick, Tony Duffield, Sophie Neal,  
Jonathon Harris (now Lewtas)

## PRIZE GIVING

# Lower School Prize Giving

Angharad Scott [OL'09]

Following in the footsteps of Joe Connor [OL'06] last year, this year we were delighted to welcome back Angharad Scott to present the prizes at Lower School Prize Giving in July. After leaving Leicester Grammar in 2009 Angharad went on to study History at Oxford University.



Shortly after graduating she moved to London to work as a Researcher on the BBC Genealogy Series 'Who Do You Think You Are?'. Since then she has gradually worked up to the position of Producer, working for a number of different broadcasters including Netflix and CNN. At present she is working on a documentary about Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Hello from  
**PRAGUE**



Harry Rowbotham [OL'12] & Ron Berry  
OLs pop up when you least expect them –  
and it is always a joy when it happens.

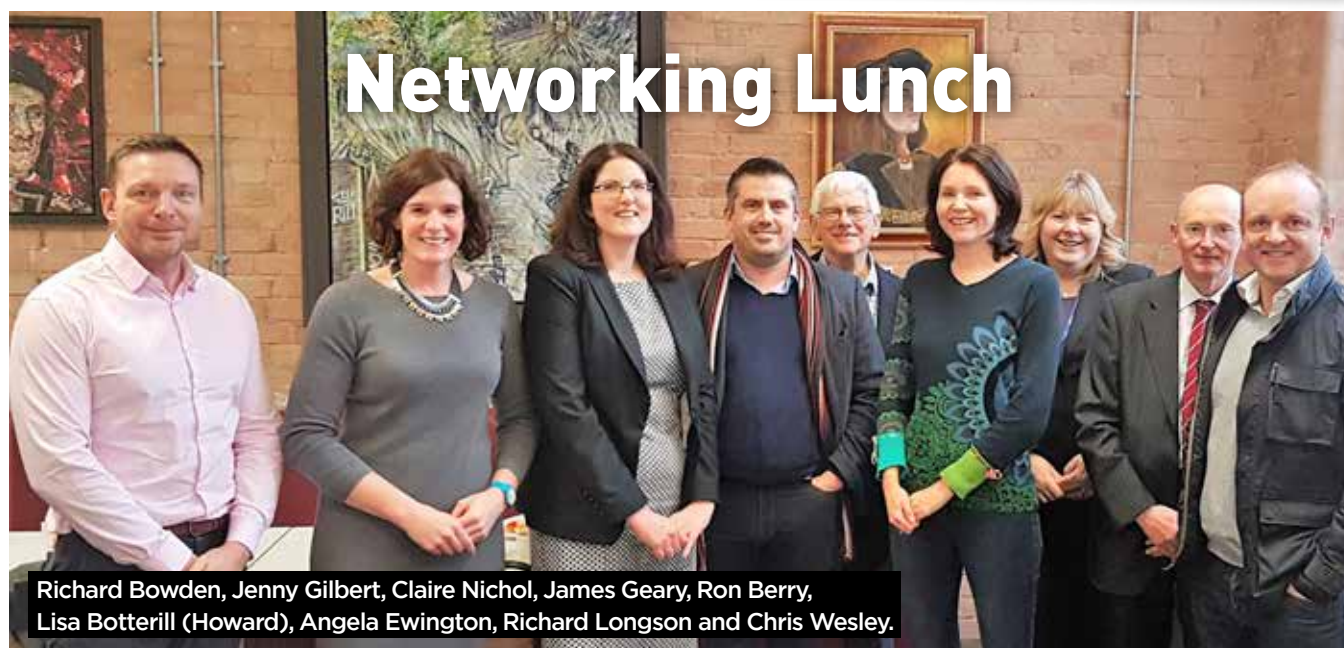


## REUNION

# Oxbridge Reunion Dinner

## at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge

**M**ost HMC schools have an Oxbridge event in their alumni calendar. It was decided this year that LGS was sufficiently well-established to be able to host its first ever Oxbridge Reunion Dinner. This took place on Saturday February 9th 2019, and the venue chosen was Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, being the former college of Ron Berry, Julian Griffin and Alison Shakespeare. Although only about 15 OLs were able to attend there was a goodly number of staff, both teaching and retired, which brought the total number of diners up to 28. It was good to see such an age range at one event, with recent leavers sharing their new experiences with leavers of the 1980s and all points in between. The meal was excellent and the evening was a great success. It is hoped to make this event an annual affair, with a reunion in 2020 at an Oxford college.



Richard Bowden, Jenny Gilbert, Claire Nichol, James Geary, Ron Berry, Lisa Botterill (Howard), Angela Ewington, Richard Longson and Chris Wesley.



# REUNION

## London Drinks



Sophie Jefford, Robin McFarland, Ellie Rashid, Theo Mast, Fraser Nisbet and Ruby Ablett.

## Carol Service



Gabrielle Potts, Katharine Douglas (Staunton) and Alix Keable.



Alice Weare, Katie O'Connor, Rahul Patel, Isabella Broderick and Olivia Hartley.

Morgan Rennie, Peter Cox and Lucy Ramsey.





## Australian Adventure

Ollie Williamson [OL'18]

Upon my return from a well-earned holiday in Barcelona, I had about a week to pack up my life before I was off to Australia for 12 months. I wasn't planning on leaving the Southern Hemisphere throughout the year, having been told to make the most of the opportunities to travel.

I had been lucky enough to land a Gap year opportunity, coaching and playing rugby in a boarding school just outside Melbourne. Although extremely nervous after being told I was the only English 'gappie', I was excited to finally meet the South African's I was going to be living and working with during my time in Australia.

After a quick orientation of the East Coast of Australia it was straight to work, where I found myself fully immersed in school life. Yet despite the long days and hard work, every day has been a dream.

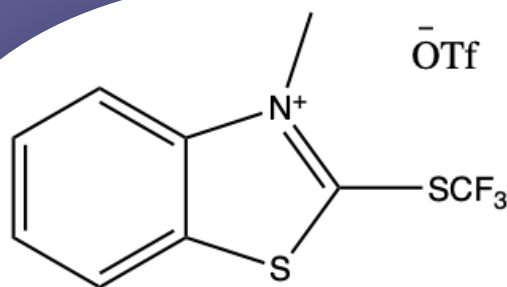
Standing alongside the Australians really has been integral to my development in both coaching and playing rugby, and having the Melbourne Rebels training regularly on site is a particular highlight.

The opportunities that I've been offered this year are second to none, and I've made memories that will last me a lifetime; from ski camp in the mountains, to embarking on a scuba camp on the Great Barrier Reef and surfing the Gold Coast, these are times I will never forget.

The long school holidays have been spent travelling with old friends and new, including trips to Thailand and roadtrips spanning the entirety of Australia. I am currently packing up my surfboard and heading to Sydney to make the most of the Easter break, ending my summer on a high.

When I return from Sydney, I have the final term to complete before I'm homeward bound and finally reunited with my family and friends. A few months spent at home will be a welcome rest before I head up to Sheffield to take up my university place.

Thank you to the OLs for granting me a Gap Year Award.



## A Taste of Research in Berlin

Ben Schwabe [OL'18]

As part of my gap year I have spent three months working in Prof. Matthew Hopkinson's chemistry lab at the Freie Universität in Berlin.

The lab specialised primarily in two fields: the use of N-Heterocyclic Carbenes (NHCs) as catalysts and the development of a new reagent for adding trifluoromethylthio- (CF<sub>3</sub>S-) and other related chemical groups onto a range of compounds.

My time was spent working on the reagents. Fluorine substituents are found widely in pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals and give these compounds very useful chemical properties. The ideal (and long-term) conclusion of the reagent development would be their widespread use in the screening and optimisation process used when developing new drugs.

We made some really nice progress on this project during my time in the lab. This included synthesising and testing reagents with different fluorine groups (Stefan, one of the PhD students, made some very smelly selenium compounds while making the reagent with a CF<sub>3</sub>Se group!) We also tested a nucleophilic S<sub>N</sub>2 system with the reagent, as well as a radical system which holds promise in becoming a versatile reaction with a catalytic cycle. These results are very exciting, but not yet validated, and so it was very sad to be leaving the lab and project behind at the end of my time there!

I really enjoyed my time in Berlin and learnt absolutely loads about modern chemistry research. I loved being a part of the really motivated group there, applying novel ideas (such as this reagent) to interesting, challenging and important problems in chemistry.

Many thanks to Matthew Hopkinson for hosting me, as well as his PhD and MChem students, who made this such a positive experience!





# A Night at the Theatre

## Programming and Scheduling at Curve

Francesca Picciano-Moss [OL '12]



We were very lucky at LGS that when it came to Drama, Mrs Griffin took us to see all sorts of work. Curve opened when I was in Year 10 and over the course of my GCSEs and A Levels, I saw lots of plays there.

I took AS Level Theatre Studies (and Music) and A Level English Literature, French and Latin because I loved literature at school. I took a gap year to work in museums in Italy and then I went to UCL to do a degree in Classics. Alongside my course I was involved in productions with the university Classical Drama Society and Francophone Drama Society, which produced work in theatres in London and toured to Athens and Paris.

After my graduation, I came back to Leicester and worked for a year on the Stage Door at Curve. The inside-out layout of the theatre is such that the Stage Door is both Front of House and backstage, and this makes the Stage Door Receptionist role very varied. Receptionists greet visitors to the theatre: customers, company members (of both 'Made at Curve' and visiting shows), associate and breakthrough artists, workshop leaders and members

of the many community groups who use the rehearsal rooms for their weekly sessions. The Receptionists answer enquiries, sell programmes and merchandise, make announcements, send out tickets in the post and do many more weird and wonderful jobs that arise every day. I had a great year getting to know Curve and the workings of a producing and receiving theatre.

When the new role of Programming and Scheduling Coordinator was created, I was very eager to apply. Some of my degree had focussed on why, at various points in history, plays have been written and performed: now I was keen to learn why and how shows are produced and programmed at Curve. On my first day I looked through some of the enquiries Curve had received from companies who tour work and was amazed at the diversity of the genres, subject matters, target audiences and scales of the shows. Since then, having looked at hundreds of shows, I have got a feel for what sort of shows fit with our programme, which of our three performance spaces they work well in, and how to schedule them so that in any one season we present work that can be enjoyed by as many

people as possible in our city, county, and beyond.

When we have all put our heads together (not just the Programming team but members of staff from all departments) and decided that we would like to programme a show, we get in touch with the company and agree on which dates we will pencil. Because we programme between one and two years in advance, these 'pencils' move around: as tour schedules change and other events at Curve are thrown into the mix, we have to try and reconcile as many parts as possible in this scheduling puzzle. When we are happy with the programme, we confirm the shows and put them on sale.

As well as looking at work a year or so ahead, I do a lot of administration for shows after they have been confirmed. I draft contracts for companies with all the details of their engagement with us and liaise with their producers so that everything is in place for when they arrive. Several productions presented at Curve have access performances – signed, captioned, audio-described, relaxed and dementia friendly – and when they do, I book the access providers and make sure they have the scripts and recordings in time to prepare.

It is a pleasure to have such a varied role within a very creative and inspiring team of people, and especially in a theatre that presents an incredibly diverse offering. I consider myself very lucky to be able to watch all sorts of inspiring work each week, and to be able to talk to the producers, directors and performers about why and how they made it.





# *From Brussels...* *... with love!*



## Nick Gutteridge [OL'07]

Brussels Journalist with The Sun

Sometimes it's the case that you can see better from a distance. For the past two years I've had the privilege of covering the biggest political upheaval our country has faced in generations as witnessed through the eyes of Europe.

Following the Brexit talks from across the Channel has given the Brussels press pack some breathing space and a different perspective on the domestic confusion that has unfolded in the UK since June 2016.

In reality, for all the Commons furore almost all of the actual action in

terms of negotiating has taken place right here, just a few floors above the Berlaymont basement where we hacks toil away every day.

My path here was quite an old-fashioned one in many ways, in that I started off as a cub reporter at a paper in Reading and spent two years learning the ropes - a jump in at the deep end that university really doesn't prepare you for!

During my spell in Berkshire I managed to mortally offend the local MP (always an achievement to be proud of) by revealing his madcap

scheme to turn part of the town's main hospital into a free school and interviewed David Cameron, then the PM, in a tiny shed on a building site. Cameron was a very slick operator and had word-perfect answers prepared for all my questions.

Afterwards I moved on to a news agency, also based in Reading, where I spent a year covering stories for the nationals. This involved a lot of knocking on doors, including those of celebrities living in the area, and covering high profile court cases.





# CAREERS

Some of the stories were grim, especially when they involved having to contact the families of people who had died. But others were uplifting, and amongst my favourite bits of the job was interviewing people who had won big on the Lottery.

Eventually the work at the agency landed me a job with a national newspaper website, the Express, where I spent two years covering breaking news as a desk reporter and news editor. It was while there that I covered the night of the referendum itself from the Leave.EU party, organised by Nigel Farage and co.

My abiding memory of that night is

standing outside on the terrace as the sun came up over the Thames interviewing David Davis, then just a backbench MP, about Leave's victory.

I was also on duty for the website the night Leicester won the Premier League - nobody was taking that story off me!

At the end of 2016, with the huge news interest in Brexit, I took the decision to move to Brussels for the website to cover the talks from where they were actually happening. I now work for The Sun paper doing the same job.

During my time here I've covered all the major flash points in the

negotiations and met a host of fascinating characters. Michel Barnier, who as a British journalist I regularly have to doorstep, is charming and often comes up to say hello to us in the Commission canteen. He once told me in the street while we were chatting that he prefers a Full English to croissants!

Regardless of how the negotiations end up after I've written this piece, the crucial nature of Britain's relationship with Europe means that interest in the Brexit story is likely to run and run. It looks like I may be kept in Belgian beers for a few more years yet.

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## John Rowan [OL'95]

European Commission

Having been a teacher for a few years, I joined the UK civil service in 2006 on the European Fast Stream programme. This programme was set up to create a cadre of Whitehall officials with EU expertise in the hope that some of them would join in the EU institutions (where Brits were under-represented) – it looks like I might be the last one to do this.

After a couple of years in Whitehall I came to Brussels in 2008 to UKRep (the UK's embassy to the EU) to be one of the UK's EU negotiators, covering health and pharmaceuticals. My timing was excellent: the weekend before I started in the job, the News of the World ran a front-page story about one of my files with the headline "EU IN SECRET PLOT TO CRIPPLE NHS", which made my first Monday at work an interesting one. Being the negotiator on the spot and seeing how the whole thing works from the inside was a fantastic experience.

I also got to see into the centre of a crisis, as I was in this job when the H1N1 pandemic broke out in 2009 (and responses to pandemics always have a major international dimension). Luckily for all of us it turned out not to be too serious, but we didn't know

that at the time (at one point I was contacted by an industry group of undertakers who were worried that we might not have enough resources to dispose of all the corpses if things turned really nasty).

In 2011 I went on secondment from the UK government to the European Commission and, in 2013, managed to pass the concours – the entrance exam for the permanent European civil service. I've been working for the Commission ever since.

One of the things I like about my job is the perspective it gives you. My first job involved putting into place EU law about cross-border healthcare. Over a couple of years I visited around 20 countries to talk to them about how they might do it. In the space of one week I went from sitting in the Federal Ministry in Berlin talking to dozens of people from several large organisations to the Health Ministry in Valletta talking to three people. In theory the subject was the same but the reality of what it meant in practice raised completely different issues and challenges. There's a strange idea that Eurocrats want to homogenise the whole of Europe, but in reality we see its variety and diversity on a daily basis. Working with this diversity gives EU-level work additional dimensions

of interest and complexity, which I really enjoy.

One of the other things I like about being a civil servant is the opportunity to work in different policy areas. After nearly ten years in health policy, I moved to employment policy in 2015 to be the head of secretariat for the EU's Employment Committee (a forum for the EU countries to do things like discuss EU employment policy and peer review each other). And I am just about to move again, this time to the Secretariat-General (roughly equivalent to the Cabinet Office) to the team that does political coordination for employment, social, health, and education policy.

I'm not going to say very much about recent events in the UK-EU relationship beyond the observation that – as you might expect – this feels very personal as well as political for me. I will stay in Brussels: quite apart from my own professional life, this is where my family life is (I met my Dutch wife here and our children were born here). I have been able to take Dutch nationality through my marriage, which makes staying here fairly straightforward for me.



# FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS 2018

## Amazing Grace

Greg Cook [OL'01]

*Dear friends,*

It is a great privilege to be here with you and be in the presence of several teachers who have got me where I am today.

If you will allow me, I will begin by singing a song that many of you may know.

*Amazing Grace*

*How sweet the sound*

*That saved a wretch like me*

*I once was lost and now am found*

*Was blind but now I see.*

One of the most influential statesmen of our time, President Barack Obama, when faced with finding the right words to say at a funeral of a pastor killed in a shooting at a church in Charleston, sang this hymn. It was unprompted and unheralded, but brought together a community in a time of grief.

I was recently honoured to sit at the back of a room in an assembly delivered by the Deputy Headmaster of the school located next to the Grenfell tower; he noted that six students were missing, or as he said, 'six empty desks' which hinted at the dark reality. And yet, he said that school should remain, for all present, a place of refuge, of community, and a place where one finds togetherness, family, friendship and hope when tragedy hits.

I will use the words of this beautiful hymn to sum up the great gift that education can give you.

So let's start with the first line: 'Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me'

I wonder if ever you received a detention at school. Though you may have felt like a total wretch on receiving it, one realises in time that life carries on, that a mistake and detention, once served, can be forgotten. This is the basis of Grace, that we are forgiven whatever we have done wrong, and that the forgiveness is a gift and a cherished memory to cling to. This song is all the more poignant when one realises that 'Amazing Grace' was written by a slave trader, John Newton, who realised the deep need in his

life for him to atone for what he had done in imprisoning and depriving other humans of life. He eventually influenced William Wilberforce to push for the abolition of slavery. Therefore, Newton's sin and redemption led to one of the greatest acts of humanity of the last three hundred years.

The lines 'I once was lost, but now I'm found', also define much of what makes schools special places. One cannot understand what it is to belong, to be found, unless at sometime, someone has been lost. Literature has always understood this, in its heroes such as Harry Potter, Oliver Twist, Odysseus, Alice in Wonderland, and Katniss Everdeen to name but a few. Jesus' words say that we must build on the right foundation when the winds and rains come, and, more subtly, but just as importantly, that we need the winds and rains of life to test the foundations that we choose to build on - that is to say, which parts of our life are built on rock and which on sand, so we can grow from each and every storm that comes our way. As we live in a community and love our families, friends and peers, we help others find themselves and in this process discover ourselves too. This love for one another mirrors the great love of God revealed in Psalm 121: a love that keeps our feet from slipping, prevents others from harm and watches over all of our lives.

The final great wisdom from this hymn is that we were blind, but now we see. Education is a passage from ignorance to knowledge, from being novices to masters. Through our years of school, the scales fall from our eyes and we begin to view life in all its complexity and beauty, through friendships, failures, relationships, successes, heartbreaks, joy and sorrow.

May we see with the eyes of truth and kindness today and beyond.





# From LGS to HONG KONG

Tom Lemon

Member of PE dept. 2011-17

**A**fter 7 fantastic years teaching at LGS my wife and I took the decision to up sticks and move across the world to Hong Kong. It was initially a bit of a culture shock, moving from working in rural Leicestershire and living in rural Warwickshire to living in one of the biggest and most crowded cities in the world. The spacious playing fields of LGS have been replaced with a quarter sized astro-turf, a tennis court sized sports hall and a roof-top, sun-drenched swimming pool. However, Hong Kong is an incredible place with so much to offer. We can be on the beach in 20 minutes, on the mountainous hiking trails in 30 minutes and at dozens of bars and restaurants within seconds.

It would be remiss of me not to mention, in true British fashion, the weather! In the relatively short 18 months since we arrived I have experienced 40° days with 90% humidity in August, 7° in February, rainfall of 70mm an hour and the truly incredible Typhoon Mangkhut where wind speeds reached 180mph. It certainly keeps you on your toes and lessons need to be adapted for high pollution and thunderstorm warnings on a weekly basis throughout the year.

The teaching side of life at Discovery Bay International School is very much the same as LGS, just on a smaller scale. The commute is somewhat unique, and jumping on the ferry at 6.30am now seems normal, although I don't think the sunrise will ever get old. The school is made up of 39 different nationalities and in my tutor group of 10

students, there are 7 different languages spoken. This reflects how multi-national and multi-cultural Hong Kong is, a real melting pot of industry and nationality.

The school trips and fixtures are somewhat different, with daily trips around Hong Kong for Basketball, Football, Rugby, Frisbee and other sports the norm; we then travel to Thailand three times a year for the FOBISIA Games. This is 3 days of competition in Swimming, Athletics, Basketball and Football. A great opportunity for the students to make new friends from all over Asia.

It has been great to have had a few OLs stop by on their travels and I'm sure there will be more in the future. We are so pleased to have made the move out here and look forward to more time here, enjoying city life and exploring Asia.



# Life at the British Museum

Sushma Jansari [OL'00]

While at university, I became particularly interested in studying antiquity through objects and took the opportunity to volunteer at the Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester and the British Museum to learn more about museums and working with collections. This experience proved invaluable while applying for jobs in the museum sector. In 2012, I began working as a research assistant in the Department of Asia at the British Museum while I was pursuing my PhD in ancient history at UCL.

I spent the next six years developing my curatorial knowledge-base in terms of the South Asian collections and also working on some fascinating, once in a lifetime projects. One of these was the refurbishment of the Sir Joseph Hotung Gallery for China and South Asia. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to curate the ancient to medieval sections of the South Asia part of the gallery, as well as a stand-alone section which focused on Sri Lanka. The sheer range and importance



of the collections is breathtaking and it means that the displays, which are seen by millions of visitors each year, need to be accordingly well-presented. One of my favourite objects on display is the Bimaran Casket. This small, gold reliquary dates to the 1st century AD and bears the earliest, datable image of the Buddha in human form - earlier images of the Buddha were symbolic.

As such, it is not only one of the most important objects in the museum, but also in the world.

In November 2018, I was appointed Tabor Foundation Curator: South Asia Collections with responsibility for the superb ancient to medieval South Asia collections at the museum. It is my dream job and I can't imagine doing anything else.

## Cricket Star Lucy Higham [OL'16]

Having left Leicester Grammar School in 2016, I am currently in my second year of studying Sports Science at Loughborough. I have had the good fortune of representing Loughborough University MCCU Women's Cricket team for the past three years and have captained it for the past two.

Playing cricket at Loughborough University is very demanding; with 4 to 5 cricket sessions and 5 strength and conditioning sessions per week. Despite the heavy training workload, the MCCU cricket programme is very supportive of our academic studies, but there is no doubt that combining the two does increase the pressure on our degree studies, so time management is a necessity.

I also play for Nottinghamshire County Women's team for 50 overs and will have the honour of captaining the 20 over side this season. This takes place during April to June and then it is a quick change of kit to start playing for Loughborough Lightning during August & September. Loughborough Lightning is part of the Kia Super League that runs as a semi-professional T20 tournament. Each team comprises of a mixture of the best overseas players, the England women's team and Talent ID (county) players.

I also completed my level 2 coaching badges last year, which has allowed me to start coaching the Regional Development Centre team based in the East Midlands, called the

Loughborough Lightning Sparks. This team is a 'feeder' team for semi-pro Loughborough Lightning team. This has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience and has given me a passion for coaching and helping other players to develop their game.

Its all change for 2020 as the county game will effectively become 8-10 professional counties that will play 50 over, 20 over and also the new hundred ball formats of the game. Continuing to develop my coaching is something I am very passionate about. However representing my country is definitely my ultimate ambition.





## NEWS



### Father Stephen's farewell

After 10 years of being involved with LGS Chapel, Father Stephen Foster has stepped down from his role as Chaplain. The OLS presented him with a bottle of Charlottes Allen's wine at his final communion service. We wish him well for the future.



### Xavier

Congratulations to Joe Connor [OL '06] – far right – and friends for reaching the final of the BBC's All Together Now. Unfortunately they didn't quite get a high enough score to win, but it was a fantastic effort all round.

## CAREERS

# Career Change

## Michael Neal [OL'12]

In 2015, I graduated with a degree in Computer Visualisation; a course I thoroughly enjoyed. However, towards the end of my time studying I knew it wasn't the career I wanted to pursue. I took the rather daunting decision to go back to university to study architecture at the University of Sheffield.

Thankfully, it was the best decision I made and I discovered a profession I fell in love with. Architectural education is a demanding and challenging experience. However, it is also immensely rewarding and I was fortunate enough to win the Royal Institute of British Architect's North Award in 2018 for my final year design work. A prestigious and competitive award in the world of architectural education. I designed a large public building that housed a new political process in the UK – a brief I had comprehensively researched and developed to explore how politically and architecturally a civic space could be more inclusive, accessible and democratic. It was a fantastic honour to win such a significant award from the RIBA after presenting to a panel of successful architects practicing in the UK.



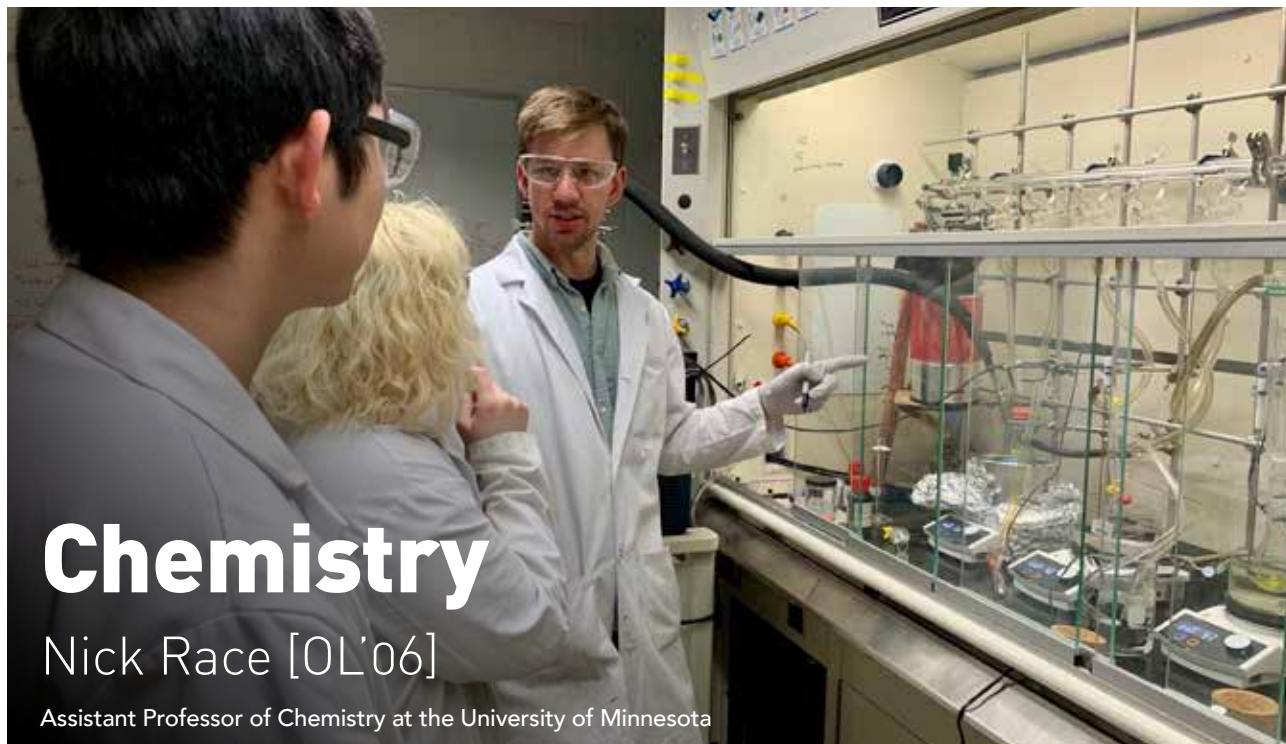
Michael Neal, second from left

Following the success in my architectural education, I feel grateful to currently be working at Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios - a practice with an international reputation for designing architecture that is socially driven with a deep-rooted respect for the environmental responsibility architects have. To anyone considering a career change, I would say to go for it – never too late and could lead you to discovering a whole new profession that you love.

I also must thank Mrs Amanda Davies, who over the years has continued to offer support and advice as I have progressed in my career - and was one of the first people to introduce architecture to me as a little year 7!



# CAREERS IN RESEARCH



## Chemistry

Nick Race [OL'06]

Assistant Professor of Chemistry at the University of Minnesota

It has been a while since I left the Grammar School and a lot has happened, the most recent of which was starting as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry at the University of Minnesota, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. I made my way to Minnesota from LGS via Oxford, Bristol and Salt Lake City, Utah.

The University of Minnesota (UMN) is an 'R1 university' which means research is a very high priority for all faculty members in all departments. My role as a faculty member is divided into three sections: research, teaching, and service. The main focus of my job is research. This means building a research group and doing exciting science that can get published in top chemistry journals and merits funding from research councils. As I write this my group comprises of two undergraduate and three graduate students. It has certainly been very exciting to establish my own research group and lay the foundation of what will hopefully be a successful research career.

My current research interests lie in the development of new chemical reactions that enable the synthesis of complex molecules from simple starting materials. Emphasis is placed on new reactions that produce less waste and use 'feedstock chemicals' that are readily-available from raw materials. It is my hope that methods we develop will provide a more efficient approach to

common structural motifs found in natural products and synthetic drug molecules. Our results will be published in chemistry journals thereby enabling other chemists to use what we developed in a context of specific interest to them.

My teaching duties involve teaching one class each semester. This typically means I give three 50-minute lectures three times a week, as well as holding office hours for the students to come and ask me questions about the course material or homework etc. Lecturing was rather nerve racking to begin with but after a few lectures I got into the swing of things and enjoyed the experience of teaching my first class very much. I wasn't quite able to replicate Mr Roebuck's immaculate board work though.

Service is basically the faculty pitching in to help the department run smoothly. This year I am in charge of organizing the 3rd year graduate student research symposium in June.

As an Assistant Professor I am at the very beginning of the tenure track process. In five years, I will submit my tenure dossier and the department will decide whether I have met the criteria for receiving tenure (and basically getting a job for life). There's an exciting road ahead between now and then...!



## SCIENCE

# Genetic Epidemiology

Nic Timpson [OL'98]

Professor of Genetic Epidemiology, University of Bristol,  
Wellcome Trust Investigator,  
Affiliate – MRC Integrative Epidemiology Unit, Principal  
Investigator – Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children

Following my days at LGS, I was fortunate enough to scrape a place at St Catherine's College Oxford where I read for my undergraduate degree in Human Sciences as well as playing lots of hockey. This and the MSc in Human Biology that followed, really marked a very special time for me, characterised by brilliant friendships, fabulous reading and a real taste for pure research and theoretical exploration. Human evolution and molecular/population genetics was my area and the arrival of a real map of the human genome in 2000/2001 (a watershed moment in human biology) provided just the type of inspiration and excitement needed to have me chasing projects in the laboratory.

During this time I met my first real academic mentor. The late Professor Ryk Ward was a blinding polymath and research lead with an insatiable appetite for learning and literature. Eccentric and excitable, Ryk was equally adept at leading insight into social science and molecular genetics. Other inspirational leaders surrounding us at the Institute of Biological Anthropology encouraged my enthusiasm for the field – in particular the application of human molecular genetics to common complex disease.

I worked in my first post-graduate job in Oxford on the genetics of blood pressure variation. A friend in the next laboratory suggested that I get in touch with an exciting

researcher in Bristol who was a terrific epidemiologist and really getting into genetics. Enter Professor George Davey Smith, an exceptional scientist, who went on to be one of my PhD supervisors along with Professor Shah Ebrahim. Together, they introduced me to the cynical and pragmatic world of clinical epidemiology, but they also gave me a window within which to apply genetics. They were able to show me how one might take a laboratory background and a molecular insight and gain value in the pursuit of clinically relevant health outcome research.

The studies that followed (including time at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics – where we undertook the first successful discovery studies for common genetic contributions to diabetes and obesity), the opportunities that span out from this (like researching in the Solomon Islands) and the move to research independence really were the product of these early experiences and patient supervision. Latterly, I was able to use some of this experience to bid for a series of programmes of research which have been funded by the Medical Research Council and Wellcome Trust and now have the privilege of being responsible for one of the finest prospective birth cohorts in the world. The Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children ([www.bris.ac.uk/alspac](http://www.bris.ac.uk/alspac)) is not only able to facilitate science and communicate it to the public, but it also has a superb legacy collection of biomedical and social data, and samples for future research activity. It is probably this position that rather accidentally led me to becoming a Professor.

Thanks to LGS and those around when I was there and that I am still close to now – clearly the stepping stone that allowed me to do something I really cherish and enjoy.



Lecturing in Cambridge 2019



Field work in the Solomon Islands ~2009

# Creative Architecture

Diana Ibáñez López [OL'03]



**A House for Artists**

© Apparata for Create and Barking and Dagenham Council



**Grime up the River playing in a Vladivostok art centre**

© Yuriy Smityuk: for the British Council and Create

I head up architecture projects at Create London, an arts charity based at the Barbican Arts Centre that has been working with artists and the public sector for ten years, testing new ways in which art can contribute more meaningfully to the lives of people in cities. Most of our projects are in East London, Europe's largest cultural quarter, and an area that also has the UK's worst index of access to the arts. i.e., unless you're already part of it, you're unlikely to participate.

I found this job by quite a winding route, one almost deliberately avoiding East London, where most architects I studied with congregated: I worked

at starchitecture practice MVRDV in Rotterdam for some three years, lived in Cairo for a year as an editor, wandered off to Germany to research mapping in the context of postcolonial literature theory, launched an award-winning news app in San Francisco, and then—missing the energy of London, and of design, and of digging into how the city is made—I came back. My work now is part art commissioning, part policy, part project management, part curatorial, part social practice.

One of our favourite things to do is to invite artists who have only worked in and with galleries to take on mundane, real-world briefs: Mary

Gaye Chetwynd's *The Idol*, for example, is a soft play room in a council-run leisure centre, while Jeremy Deller's *Sacrilege* (a bouncy 1:1 scan replica of Stonehenge), engaged local residents in the newly opened Olympic Park.

Our first projects were delivered as part of the Olympic legacy, to curate a cultural legacy for the games, and included architecture collective Assemble's first commission: *Folly for a Flyover*, which I helped to build (spot me at the opening, front row, second from left).

These commissions did something new with art funding: they let a set of briefs set out by risk-averse, pre-determined and carefully managed public sector terms do unexpected—even risky—things, such as recoding a grime track about protest and belonging as part of a 'public realm activation' brief.

I've just got back from a lecture and workshop tour for the British Council, on which we presented our work and explored our methodology with artists, local government officers, curators and architects in 5 Russian cities.

At the end of a lecture in a Vladivostok art centre, one artist asked how we begin conversations with the authorities: what makes this institutional risk-taking possible. Before we could



**Folly for a Flyover**, © Assemble: Create



## Grape Minds Think Alike

Michael Jelley [OL'01]



Diana © Yuriy Smityuk

answer, a local government official stood up at the back and read out her mobile phone number to an audience of artists, architects and activists...

I'm currently working on A House for Artists, an ambitious new-build project in collaboration with Barking and Dagenham Council, due to break ground this summer.

Designed by architects Apparata, A House for Artists consists of 12 flats for artists, shared studios and a dedicated public space and a year-round programme of activity. In return for reduced rents, resident artists will contribute half a day each week to delivering a free public programme, helping to build skills and creative expertise in perpetuity for the local community, removing barriers to arts and fostering inclusive, creative ways of using civic spaces. A House for Artists is a pilot solution to the challenges faced by councils who struggle to build and manage community spaces, and those of artists who find it increasingly hard to live and work in London; the intention is for the project to create a replicable model for sustainable community centres paired with genuinely affordable long-term housing provision—two briefs that, individually, are almost impossible to deliver and harder to keep up.

Alongside my work at Create I run an MA architecture unit at the Royal College of Art, teach on the Spatial Practices MA at Central Saint Martins, and am a Guest Professor of Product Design at the University of the Arts in Karlsruhe.

I left LGS in 2001 and there have been a fair few changes of life and career before Grape Minds, my independent wine shop in North Oxford, opened in November of last year.

I studied Maths at Corpus Christi, and maintained a careful balance between playing every available sport, visiting the less avoidable lectures, and investing time in the numerous and available drinking establishments of Oxford.

After university, I started a career in occupational health and wellbeing, and spent several happy years consulting for all kinds of clients, along the way running OH services for GlaxoSmithKline, the Welsh Government, Unilever and Save the Children. It was an interesting business, and we have still only scratched the surface of ensuring a psychologically healthy workplace, but after ten years I had reached the point of every subsequent job being in London, Manchester or working from home, a way of working I'd fallen out of love with in the five preceding years.

Having established that I wanted a job with more sociability, I joined Majestic Wine's graduate scheme (at the ripe age of 33), took my wine qualifications (a world of pleasure and unending study) and enjoyed 20 very happy months in Oxford's Summertown shop, the second largest in the UK. However, finding Majestic's new direction a step



away from the customer-led and wine-loving approach that I'd so enjoyed, my business partner Graeme and I decided there was an opportunity in physical shopping that we could meet.

Setting up a business around a full time job is undoubtedly the hardest I've ever had to work, but as a result I now have a rudimentary knowledge of property law, tax, import duties, insurance, licensing, damp-proofing cellars, and numerous other tiny but vital nuggets that have allowed us to set up our little shop on a parade in Oxford's answer to Kensington. Opening on 30th November, I am also an authority on the freezing point of paint. Along the way, we also tasted over 2000 wines in order to put together our range of 400.



We've loved every moment since we've opened, have formed some great relationships with locals and are in talks to supply some fine dining restaurants in our area. 5 months since opening, we still feel pretty novice, but doing our own thing is incredibly liberating. I've never worked harder, never earned less, never tried more fabulous wine, but I cycle to work every day with a smile on my face. Cheers!

# House Icon

Charlie Fraser (OL'18)



The LGS House noticeboards have often been decorated with student interpretations of each House since the School started. Last academic year saw an open competition to design logos and mottos for the four Houses. Entries were judged by our External Relations team and it was decided that Charlie Fraser's design was the best. Each House then had their logo "standardised" and they sit proudly on the House noticeboards.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

# 25<sup>TH</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY REUNION

**Saturday 14th September**

**King Richard III Visitor Centre**

We will be holding an evening event at the King Richard III Visitor Centre for all OLs who left in July 1994 and July 1995. The cost will be £15 per person to include a buffet meal and there will be a cash bar. To reserve your space please email

**[oldleicestrians@leicestergrammar.org.uk](mailto:oldleicestrians@leicestergrammar.org.uk)**

## *OL Carol Service*

**at Leicester Grammar School  
Great Glen,**

**Thursday 19th December 7.30pm**

## Contact us

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