

ROUNDWOOD PARK ALUMNI: Newsletter 06: Nov. 2013

Welcome to the sixth edition

RPS – the metamorphosis continues

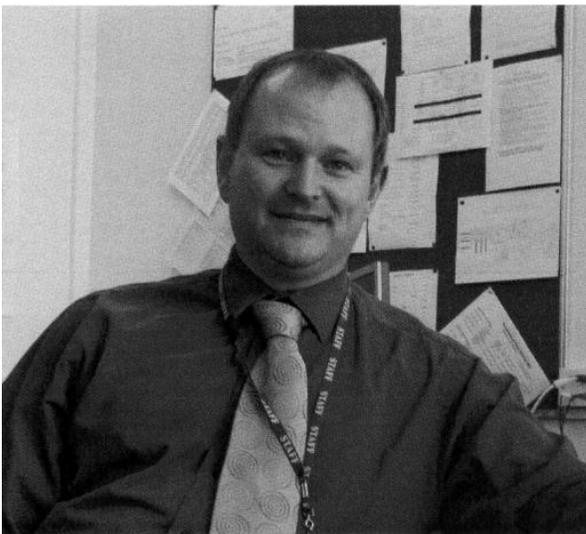
The school remains shrouded in plastic sheeting whilst the ongoing extensive structural improvements continue. The hall and foyer are complete along with a quiet and efficient heating system and the new electronic visual aids facility. The work that started at the beginning of the summer holidays is hoped to be completed before the end of the year!



Hall and foyer etc.

A Special Interview with the Headmaster, Mr Alan Henshall.

Extracted from Park Life' winter 2012 – by Sophie Stables and Bob Palmer.



WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE 5? My lifetime ambition, until 20 / 21, was to be a civilian pilot - but I failed some of my aptitude tests for British Airways! I wasn't interested in military. When I was 12 I sold my model train set to pay for gliding lessons. I regret that, now that I have two boys!

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO RPS? I worked at Beaumont and Veralum, so I knew the area well and enjoyed working in it, I like mixed schools, and Round-wood has a fantastic reputation; it was the perfect fit for me, and I felt well-qualified for the job,

IF YOU HAD TO BE SENT TO A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT 3 THINGS WOULD YOU TAKE?

iPod, books, and pictures of my family (or better still, my family),

WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE COMING TO RPS? I had quite a few jobs; I worked in a warehouse for three weeks, pulling labels off trousers. It was like purgatory, with endless boxes of trousers coming in! I was a holiday rep in France for a while, where I met my wife. I spent a season in the med, and a season in Brittany - I burned quite badly!

WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE? I mostly like indie and guitar-based music (I actually play guitar, but very badly), I bought the new Kings of Leon album on Saturday, but I also like REM, and the Smiths are my favourite band. Their songs are hard to play though, so I'm becoming quite demoralized!

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE BOOKS? The Book Thief, The Kite Runner and a Tale of Two Cities,

WHAT DO YOU LIKE DOING IN YOUR SPARE TIME? Reading, cooking, watching Leeds United, playing 5-aside football. At Simon Ball, I scored in a 2-1 win against Sandringham school!

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BECOME A TEACHER? I love reading and history, and I wanted to inspire others how I'd been inspired. You can learn a lot from young people, and I love my job; I've enjoyed it for eighteen years.

WHAT is YOUR FONDEST MEMORY OF CHILDHOOD? I enjoyed sixth form, the whole camaraderie of it. Doing Shakespeare in English lessons was good, teachers in sixth form inspired me after trawling through GCSE Macbeth. That's what I like about here - we're about inspiration, we're not just an exam factory.

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO ACHIEVE AT RPS? I want to maintain and improve - high quality teachers and a high quality education experience. You've got to keep moving forward; recruiting the right people, working with the students and their suggestions. It's important to keep running in order to stay still, and have a healthy competition with other local schools.

IF YOU HAD A MOTTO, WHAT WOULD IT BE? A less serious one would be "don't worry, be happy!", but really "all you can do is your best"! We're all our own worst critics, so it's important to remember not to be too hard on yourself.

Alumna Angela returns to share her experiences.



Angela Clarke [1998] made a return to her old school on November 5th to talk to some Y10 students on a careers convention organised by Mrs Angela Bech. Angela talked about her experiences in journalism and as an author. Angela was delighted to come in and help and she enjoyed meeting the students and was impressed by their engaging, enthusiastic and questioning

nature. She also remarked just how much the school had changed since she was a student there and remarked “I think if I'd been on my own I would have got quite lost”.

Angela is a freelance journalist and currently writing her second book following the successful publication of her first novel called 'Confessions of a Fashionista' about her work in the fashion industry.

Making a contribution to help our students

If you would like to offer any professional advice or opportunities for our pupils/students please let us know.

Are the alumna now running the school?

The hub of any organisation is the administration staff. The school is indeed fortunate to have the following 3 alumna.



Catherine [Beale] Croft
[class of 1980]



Karen [Perryment] McHale
[class of 91]



Karen Mason
[class of 1982]

Alumni grapevine – The following are some of the alumni that have made contact



James Dynes [2000] Following his stint at Cambridge University, where he studied Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and his previous work as an Engineer, James has now changed companies and moved to Lausanne in Switzerland to work on the Blue Brain project at EPFL.

Chris Cairns [1999] Chris, having studied Genetics at Aberdeen University and then worked in Science before moving into Management has just completed his MBA at the University of Bradford.



Robert Cockayne, [2005], is now a negotiator at Christie & Co [specialist property advisers/brokers]. Rob studied Law at the University of Kent.

Felissity Francis [2001] is now Facilities Coordinator at Kimberley-Clark. Felissity gained a BSc(hons) in Exercise with Sports and Coaching from the Manchester Metropolitan University.





Chris Fellas [1998] is now a Business Analyst at Racing Post. Chris studied Leisure & Business Management at Southampton University.

Tom Drake [2003] is now a Research Fellow at the Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit [MORU]. Tom studied Chemistry at Bristol University.



Lee Atkinson [1988] Studied Building Studies & Management at Coventry and Nottingham Trent Universities. He has worked in the construction industry where he is a Contracts Manager in London.

Nicola Frame [1996] is now UK & Ireland PR Manager at Intrepid Group. Nicola is an English graduate from the University of York.



Sabrina Borgatti [2010] gained a degree in Politics from the University of Exeter. She worked as an Intern in an MP's office, as a British Student Rep in Beijing for the UK-China Forum 2013, as a student information assistant and as a Youth Volunteer Coordinator. and Sabrina is currently a Business Management Assistant at the Dragons' Apprentice Challenge in the St Albans area.



Joanne Robinson [1986] is an established and highly qualified graphic designer with considerable experience in a wide range of industry. She is now the owner/designer of 'Girl Friday Design' in New Zealand.

Joshua Dixon [2007] After gaining degrees in Sports & Exercise Science [BSc, University of Chichester] and an MSc in Strength & Conditioning from Middlesex university , Josh embarked on a career involving many aspects of sports and coaching and including a spell at Arsenal FC. He is currently the Lead Conditioning Coach at Queens Sports Academy.



Leanne Stanley [1999] is a fashion designer [womenswear] at Love in Hertfordshire.

Tariq Khan [2003] is Commercial Manager UK at TUI UK. Tariq gained an honours degree in Business and Management from Oxford Brookes University.





Sally Moss [2005] has been a Marketing Services Executive for Sky Business for a year now. Sally gained a BSc in Marketing from Aston University.



Jon Gingell [1991] has been Chief Technical Officer at OpenSymmetry for 9 years now. A highly qualified and experienced physicist with degrees from UCL [PhD (astrophysics), BSc hons (physics)].



Lucy Trevis [2004] is a Management Consultant at KPMG. Lucy is a multitalented individual who gained a BSc in Medical Biochemistry from Birmingham and a MSc in HR Consulting from London South Bank University. She also showed artistic tendencies in her schoolgirl days and made the following 'bust'.



Charlie Collin [2010] is now a Recruitment Consultant at Optimus Search Limited. Charlie gained a BA in Fashion Apparel design from Sheffield Hallam University.

Sanket Deshpande [2004] is Head of product at Mobile-web Startup. Sanket Gained an MEng in Electrical Engineering with Management from Imperial College, London.



Matt Greene [2007] is now a Jnr Mining Analyst at Ocean Equities. Matt studied Geography at the University of Plymouth.

Charlotte Harris [2009] is now Mail Order and Dispatch Manager at D W Stevenson Ltd. She gained a BA in Textile Design – specialising in woven textiles from Loughborough University.



Liam Usher [2005] is now Resource Advisor - Forensics – KPMG. Liam gained a BSc in computer Animation at the University of Portsmouth.

Chanel Tappin [2009] is team Leader for Blue Arrow, one of the UK's largest recruitment Agencies.





Sid Desai [1996] is Solution Delivery Director at MICROS Systems Inc. Sid gained a BSc in Mathematics and Computer Science from Kings College London.

James Brooke [1991] after attending Sheffield Medical School and qualifying [MBChB] to practice, James has been a GP in Stevenage for over 10 years. This November, after 21 years or so we met up in a local pub in Harpenden to reminisce. He is married with 3 children.



Lizzy Fitzgerald [2010] Having graduated with a degree in Geography from Oxford University, Lizzy is now studying at UCL for an MSc in Geospatial Analysis which is fundamentally a “fancy” way of saying mapping on computers and spatial statistics.

Apologies to those that have not been mentioned.



Staff changes & news

Betty Wolfenden, retired maths teacher, remains active and lives locally. She is still chair of the Workers’ Education Authority and an active committed helper with/for the Harpenden Trust. She has regular meetings with a number of other retired [female] teachers in the area [viz. Mrs Glenys Metherell, Sci/Chem], Mrs Judy Muntou, Mrs Maureen Toms [Bus Ed] Mrs Sue Lucas [Maths], Mrs Francois Pajonkowska[[Mrs P./French].

Kaye Cartwright, ex-Head of Cookery etc. who left in 1987 to further her teaching career and take up a senior Leadership post is alive and well and remains in Herts.

Ken Jones, ex-Head of English also remains in Harpenden and amongst his many interests and pursuits he continues to support the local charity, the Harpenden Trust, at Christmas.

Miss Fleur Baikie [class of 2010] is now a full time teacher of modern Foreign Languages.

An interview with Miss Fleur Baikie – November 2013

1. You were appointed Head Girl in your last year at school/Y13. What made you apply for this position and what did you most enjoy and dislike about this role?

I applied for the position because I wanted to give something back to the school and students who had given me so much. I really enjoyed working with other students both in my year and lower years and getting a more rounded view of went on in the school. I also loved organising the social events with the social secretaries and all of the end of year celebrations. It was occasionally a frustrating and time consuming role to have, but I did really enjoy it!



2. Do you have any favourite memories of your time at RPS?

At the end of year 11 I was fortunate enough to go on the World Challenge Expedition to Tanzania. As part of this we got to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and complete a project in a school. This was an unforgettable experience and I often think back to it and smile. I will also always remember our year 13 leaver's ball at Tewin Bury Farm. Not only was it a lovely evening, as Head Girl I had worked with the Social Secretary to organise the event and it was wonderful to see it all come together and to see everyone in our year share a really special evening.

3. You decided to study Languages at Durham University. Why?

Having been brought up in a bilingual household I have always had an interest in other languages and how they work, and also in other cultures and how different they are. I enjoyed studying both French and German to A level at RPS and always looked up to the MFL teachers, so when it came to choosing my degree it seemed obvious! I also enjoyed studying both History and English Literature at A level and as part of an MFL Degree you have the opportunity to study topics such as the history, politics, culture and literature of Francophone, Hispanic or Germanic countries. Therefore I was still going to be able to enjoy these areas of study within an MFL degree.

4. What did you most enjoy about your time at Durham?

Durham is a beautiful city, which I thoroughly enjoyed living in. Every day when I walked to lectures I thought how lucky I was to be learning in such a wonderful place. It is also a great University for all of its extra-curricular activities. In the five years (well technically four) I was there I had the opportunity to take part in so many different activities and events and this is what I most enjoyed about being there. It was the opportunity to discover a whole range of hobbies and interests, some of which I never even knew I had, and share them with like-minded people who are not only now some of my closest friends, but who also used to challenge my views and broaden my mind on a daily basis.

5. Were you able to go abroad to enhance your language skills and if so where did you go and why was it valuable?

As part of a Modern Languages Degree you have to take a year abroad in your third year of study. I spent my first 6 months as a Foreign Languages Assistant in Austria, teaching English to pupils ranging from 8-20 years of age. I lived in a village in the mountains called Bischofshofen which is just south of Salzburg. It was an incredible experience and a great opportunity for me to see if I wanted to become a teacher. I loved living in Austria and even managed to learn how to ski. My students taught me to ski in the afternoons as school finished at 1pm and most of them worked as ski instructors.

My second placement took me to Madrid for five months, where I studied at the University of Alcala de Henares. This was a true challenge as I had only been learning Spanish for two years and had just been speaking German for 6 months. I lived in a house of eight including three Spaniards, a Mexican girl, two Hungarians and a guy from Portugal – It was certainly good fun and the occasional confusion in communication helped us bond! I really enjoyed the weather and as I had a lot of spare time I travelled all over Spain.

The third part of my year abroad was spent in Perpignan in the South of France working in a Tourism Office. This was a valuable experience as I got to see my languages 'in action'. We had

enquiries from a range of people from all across the world and so I was constantly switching between my languages to communicate with them.

6. What first attracted you to think you would like to enter the teaching profession?

When I was a child I used to teach my teddies and kept a register and even had a mini whiteboard, so I think teaching has always been in my brain and has been something I am interested in and enjoy. When I went to Austria and spent six months in the classroom, working with young people, I realised that it was what I wanted to do. I looked forward to work each morning and really enjoyed getting to know and working with young people. It can be the most rewarding job, yes it is difficult at times, but the 'lightbulb' moments are just incredible!

7. How did you find your teaching practice in other schools?

I did my PGCE in Durham and so was placed in two schools 'oop' North. My first placement school was a very large comprehensive school just outside of Newcastle and it was different to RPS. The pupils came from a wide range of backgrounds and behaviour management was my main challenge. My second placement school was a private school in Yarm, so completely different yet again. It was a small school with a heavy focus on academia but also a vast range of extra-curriculars going on. I ended up, much like most of the staff there, running several lunch time clubs and going on many trips. I had great colleagues and I really enjoyed getting a small insight into the private school system.

8. Why did you apply to return to Roundwood Park to teach?

When thinking about where to apply for jobs, I was looking to move back to Hertfordshire anyway and then the job at Roundwood came up, so I thought, why not? I still had links with the school and had been back on several occasions to give assemblies and help at open evening and language days. I had always enjoyed being at RPS and so thought it would be a great place to start my career.

9. Has the school changed much since you were a student there/here?

For a start there are two new buildings that were not here. The maths/music block and the new gym are both amazing additions to the school and provide great facilities for staff and students. ASPIRE is also a new part of RPS life as is the House system. I love the idea of pupils having contact with people from other year groups through house events.

10. Do you enjoy the school canteen lunches?

I still eat in the canteen on a regular basis and enjoy the variety of products available. I have recently been introduced to the Café Geraghty's just outside the languages block and sometimes head there for a toastie too!

11. Since you have been a full time teacher now for almost a term how has the job turned out? Are you surprised at the range and extent of all the things that are involved in teaching today?

It is certainly very busy and I never get bored! I think I was fairly well informed about what teaching entails as my mum is a teacher and a number of my friends are teachers, however it does continue to amaze me how we all get through every week relatively unscathed. Sometimes when I look at my 'to do' list I wonder how I am going to plan all of my lessons, mark the books, and write reports alongside the daily activities involved in teaching such as going on duty, attending meetings,

running lunchtime clubs and actually teaching some lessons, to name but a few! I have always been someone who loves to be busy though, so it is the right job for me!

12. Where would you like to be in 5 years time?

In five years time I would love to still be at Roundwood, maybe seeing my own form into year eleven! Ideally I would love to be able to bring Spanish back to RPS and get involved with promoting Spanish in the curriculum.

13. Do you think that you will remain in teaching until you are 68?

I am not so sure about that! 68 feels like it is a long way away considering I am only 23. I do love my job and am currently throwing everything I can into it, but who knows what the future holds? I loved living abroad, so a stint abroad may be on the cards...

Visit your old school - Guided tours

If you are in the vicinity or live locally we would be delighted to see you and show you around the school. Please contact us by email or phone the school to arrange for a visit. Wednesdays are preferred but if you can only make another day we can arrange for a Sixth Former to show you around.

Reunion – when?

We hope to hold a reunion in the summer at the school. We would propose inviting alumni over a short 5 year range, perhaps starting with 1985-90, then 1990-95, then 1980-85 etc.

Many of the 'old' staff that attended during those periods would be invited to attend and talk briefly about their memories etc. whilst allowing mingling over a buffet or after a formal meal? More on this later via a dedicated communication that will ask for your views.

Making contact /sharing 'News & Views'

If you would like to be 'listed' on the Alumni listings please make contact. You can email in your 'synopsis' (see current listings for ideas) with a photo or indicate if you have a LinkedIn photo.

Also we are keen to publish your views or reminiscences and/or old school photos. Please email them in to this desk. B.smith@roundwoodpark.co.uk

No material/data will be published without your permission.

We would really like to hear any comment or views you have regarding the Alumni.

Getting in touch

If you wish to appear on the alumni listings or have an item of news that you think would be of interest PLEASE email with attached photos if possible to alumnioffice@roundwoodpark.co.uk

Alternatively you can contact this office -

By the school web site www.roundwoodpark.co.uk

By email – alumnioffice@roundwoodpark.co.uk

By LinkedIn – Roundwood Park

By face book – Roundwood Park [not Roundwood Park school]

By post - to Alumni Office or Dr BML Smith,

Roundwood Park School,

Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3AE

By telephone – 01582 765344 or ext. 208 on Wednesday only.