



# ROUNDWOOD PARK ALUMNI Newsletter 25: December 2018

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[www.roundwoodpark.co.uk/alumni](http://www.roundwoodpark.co.uk/alumni)



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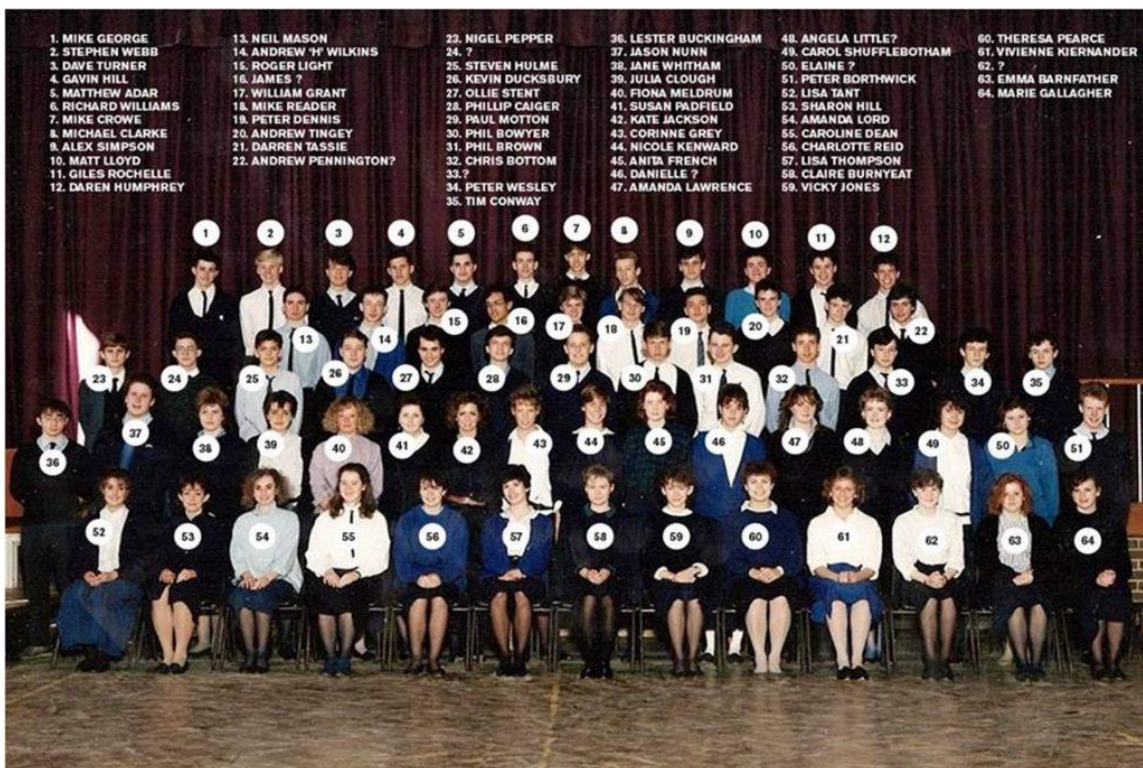
***PLEASE forward this newsletter to ex-Roundwood friends and encourage them to make contact to be added to our mailing list. This applies especially if you are holding 'mini' reunions so please let us know of other alumni who are not, as yet, receiving these newsletters.***

## Help us to keep in touch with you.

PLEASE inform us to ensure we are using your correct/preferred contact details. Changing jobs often means a change in email address. Please email us or use the link to update details.

<http://www.roundwoodpark.co.uk/alumni-registration-form/>

## Retracing the Past.



Having been sent this photo a while ago, I asked who everyone was and this was sent back! amazing what the technically adept and young(er) memories can do. Any errors or can you fill in

the blanks or? marks. If you are on here we would like to hear your memories of your time at school.

## Alumni in the News

We would like to hear from you if you have been in the news, print or on screen or any activity or venture you would like to share.

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**George Attfield** (class of 2014) was featured, scoring a try in Harpenden RFU's 21-19 defeat to Welwyn Garden City.

You can read the article that appeared in The Herts Advertiser (2/10/2018) on the Alumni News site.

## Comedian Rhys on TV.

Clearly some of us do not watch television enough but many staff do and it seems are keen fans of **Rhys James** who often appears in Mock the Week on BBC.



## Alumni return to judge House Music



The House music event continues to be popular and generates a lot of competition between the students and staff of the houses. It has been the convention to invite alumni to be part of this event and to act as judges.

**Jenni (nee Kilvert) Cresswell** (2000) and **Arthur Diesbecq** (2016) were among the judges at October's House Music Event.



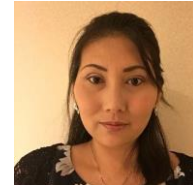
## Careers advice through the eyes of our alumni.

**Luke Firmin** (2001) and **Angel Ashcroft** (1996) both came in and gave brilliant talks to Year 11 for 'Navigating Your Next Steps' their talks covered their own career paths and included words of advice and 'things I wish I'd known when I was your age'. They gave some really valuable advice about how to approach working life, the importance of resilience, persistence and being true to yourself.



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We then had Mock Interviews - designed to give the students the opportunity to practise talking about themselves with a 'real life' employer. **David Nichols** (1996) and **Richard Harris** (2004) came in to help with that. They were both fantastic and were able to give some very sound advice and valuable feedback to Year 12. They were really impressed with our students - amazed at how much they had achieved and the breadth of experience and achievements. Richard enjoyed a tour of the school afterwards.



*Organised and report by Vikki Psaila (Employment Liaison & Events Coordinator)*



### The 'staff' Interview

**Kirk Dumpleton**

1994-2016

Part time 2016- present

1. What did you study at University – why that subject in particular?

**I took a joint honours degree in History / PE and initially taught both subjects. It was a close call with English but an inspirational history teacher helped give me a long term passion for the subject.**

2. Do you have any fond memories of your time at university?

**I had a good group of friends. The athletics coach had got 6 of us who were athletes on the same accommodation floor, and we maintained a strong bond**



**across the 4 years of the course. There was a lot of practical, and I fondly remember doing my best against a rugby prop forward in a judo match.**

3. Did you, or have you, ever considered any other career path?
4. I think you came into teaching late! If so what did you do before joining RPS?

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**After graduating from Loughborough University I spent two years teaching at a school in Hemel Hempstead but left teaching for a while after this, working for the sports company Nike before opening and running my own sports shop for 7 years. It was great experience, but an economic recession and ever increasing rents led me to close the shop.**

5. Why did you take up teaching as a career?

**I enjoy teaching my specialist subjects and working with young people. I wanted to help students secure good exam results but also aimed to deliver lessons in an engaging way, encouraging the students to feel safe to express their views.**

6. Why did you choose Roundwood Park School and have you ever worked in another school?

**A good friend told me about a vacancy at Roundwood Park School. [ Mrs Gordon – a maths teacher at the school. ] I was impressed by the atmosphere and ethos in the school, as well as the good exam results achieved. My first school in Hemel Hempstead was a small comprehensive with 600 students. After I closed my sports shop I worked at a large multi-cultural school of 1400 students in Harrow for a year before coming to Roundwood Park.**

7. Why did you choose to teach the subjects (RE, History, Gen Studies ) you did?

**History and PE are my specialist subjects, but at RPS I have also taught RE and PSHE / Citizenship up to year 9 and General Studies to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. I think these subjects are great for discussing moral issues which are common place in modern society and recognising the different views people hold. I believe that learning to argue your case in an informed way is a great skill which can be developed in these subjects.**

8. What do/did you most enjoy about your many roles at RPS?

**I enjoyed being part of the Senior Leadership team as an Assistant Head teacher, and contributing to decisions intended to make this school the best it can be for the students here. I am now used predominantly as a history teacher and still enjoy teaching this as a specialist subject. Being a Head of Year and helping students and families deal with difficult circumstances they faced was not easy at times, but was also very rewarding work.**

9. If you have to pick out one thing that you most enjoyed here, what would it have been?

**In my 24 years at Roundwood Park I have most enjoyed the way that a strong relationship between staff and students has been maintained. I believe that the staff here really care about students as individuals as well as wanting them to gain good results and open the doors to future paths they wish to pursue. The staff here have always been a friendly bunch and supportive of each other.**

10. Rumour has it that you were an accomplished athlete and that you once raced against both Steve Ovett and Sebastian Coe and beat them? True?

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**Yes. When I was 16 I beat Ovett [ 2<sup>nd</sup> ] and Coe [ 10<sup>th</sup> ] to win the English Schools Cross Country Championship. Although I did not go on to Olympic glory I ran 4minutes 01 seconds for the mile and 2 hours 24 minutes for the marathon, winning a number of regional and national titles and competing for England several times.**

11. When did you take up running and do you still run to keep fit or for competition?

**I started cross country running at school at the age of 13. I don't compete now but do some running, swimming and work in the multi-gym several times a week to try and keep in shape.**

12. Do you have any special moments that stand out that you are willing to share about your experiences at RPS?

**I have been delighted with the achievements of numerous students that I have taught over the years. It is such a privilege to teach here amongst some extremely gifted students, but just helping students do their best has been special. I remember one boy who struggled to write more than 4 lines for a history essay in Year 7, but went on to get a GCSE and A-Level grade B in the subject. A great achievement. The PE department here are fabulous, and sporting successes have brought special memories. See below.**

13. Did you also take part in extra-curricular activities such as visits or sporting events with the students?

**I coached a rugby team for several years and have helped with the athletics coaching for most of my years here. Being district athletics champions in my first few years here and achieving this again last year with a great young squad was memorable. My son being in the rugby First 15 that went almost unbeaten by local Hertfordshire schools recently was a great personal memory.**

14. How do you feel you made an impact at RPS?

**Students tell me that they find me approachable and able to discuss when things are going well or not so well and help they might need. I believe I have helped students gain the exam success they have wanted, but have also sought to encourage all students of all ability levels and characters to believe in themselves. A few years ago a young man came up to me in a fast food restaurant where I had taken my children after a swimming session. He said that he just wanted to tell me how much he had enjoyed having me as a GCSE history teacher. I was humbled and honoured to receive this comment and delighted to see how he had developed from a quiet, shy Year 10 into a confident young man who took the trouble to say this to me. This is the sort of impact we try to make as teachers.**



15. After many years teaching full time you have opted to go part time. What has led you to this?

**As my children have moved to, or are about to move on to university, I have reduced my work load to 3 days a week. This is allowing me to balance the enjoyment of still making an impact through teaching with having more time to spend with my wife, wider family and do a little more travelling to places we have wanted to visit.**

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16. Do you have any hobbies or leisure commitments that you enjoy or can share?

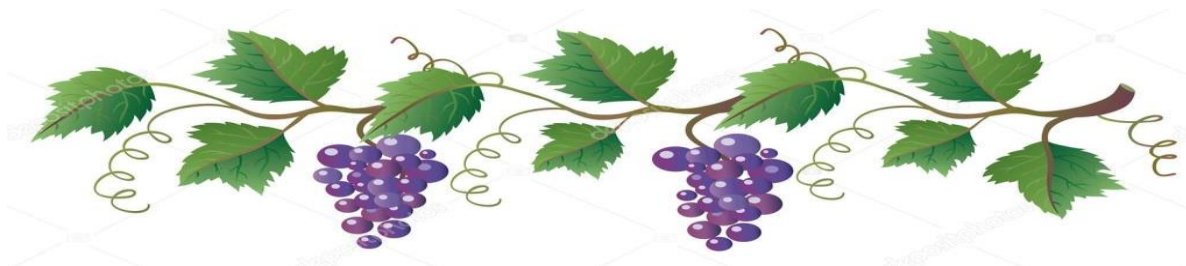
**I have become more of a gardener in recent years, which will amuse older friends who know I was fairly ignorant about the world of shrubs and flowers! I have always enjoyed reading both factual and fictional works and continue to do so in times of leisure. Maintaining some kind of fitness routine is something I like to do even as the years are added on!**

17. Given the changes in education over the years would you, given your time again, go into teaching or into another profession?

**I still believe that teaching is a great profession. There is far more administrative work involved in the job now, but if you have real passion for your subject and working with young people then it is still a great career. To me, having some time to experience the world of work outside of teaching was also ideal.**

18. When students look back on their time at RPS how would you like to be remembered?

**He cared about us, brought some fun into the learning and helped us to do our best.**



**If you do not wish to appear on our randomly selected GRAPEVINE section, please let us know. Equally if you would like to be featured here please let us know and also provide some information you would wish printed.**



**. Aaron Abrahams (2000)**

Aaron qualified in personal financial planning. He has worked as a stockbroker and wealth management. He is currently an independent

Financial Adviser at Lonsdale Wealth Management in London. He is also a co-founder of Cooper McMillan; a financial management company.



**Mark Baker (2001)**

Mark has a BSc in Engineering from South Bank University. He joined National Grid and worked in a number of varying roles. Mark is currently a Senior Analyst in the Electricity Market Reform division in Warwick.

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**Nick Cockayne (2003)** Nick gained a 1st class honours BA in English from Reading University before going on to gain an MA in Creative and Critical Writing from Sussex University. He worked in the publications industry before his current position as Account Manager at ProQuest providing resources for Universities and libraries globally.



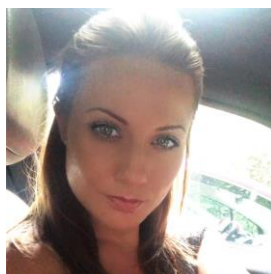
**Sanket Deshpander (2004)**

Sanket an MEng. In Electrical Engineering with Management from Imperial College, London. Having worked as a software engineer, he currently works for RhythmOne that deals with marketing and advertising.



**Mitra Esmizadeh (2005)**

Mitra has gained considerable experience over a wide range of events management. Mitra is currently the UK sales director across the culinary division within IMG ( sports marketing) in London.



**Christianne McQuillan (2005)**

Christianne qualified as a Dental Hygienist and Dental Therapist at Kings College Hospital Foundation Trust in London. Christianne currently practises at a Dental Practice in Leighton Buzzard and also in Luton.

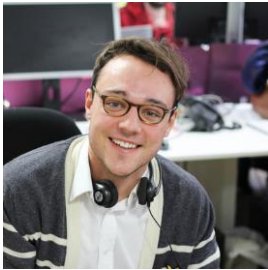


### **Charlotte Fox (2008)**

Charlotte studied Marketing with tourism at the University of Hertfordshire gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> class honours BA degree.

Having gained experience in visual merchandising and international administration, Charlotte currently works in International Sales at M&Co in London.

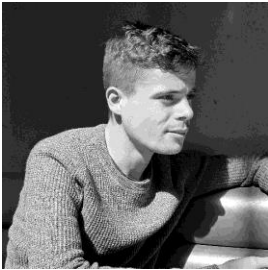
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### **Ewan Hamilton (2010)**

Ewan gained a 1<sup>st</sup> class honours BA in History and American Studies from Manchester University with a year in Tennessee.

He is currently the Commercial Manager at Experian Consumer Services in London.



### **Tom Kearns (2011)**

Tom gained a BSc in Zoology from Durham University and a BA in Medical and Veterinary Science from the University of Cambridge.

Tom is currently an Account Executive at TVF.



### **Romy Greyling (2013)**

Romy gained a BA (hons) in Interior Architecture and Design from the Arts University in Birmingham. Romy is currently the Events and Social Media Manager at the Pudding Stop in St Albans.

## **SAD NEWS In Memory of James Pavitt.**



It is with great sadness that we heard the news that James Pavitt ( class of 1997/98?) had died. James was a qualified pilot and first officer/captain. This was devastating news as he had just won a difficult custody battle for his three daughters. A Fund has been set up to raise



money for his daughters' education. There was a service at St John's church in Harpenden on Monday 12th November which was attended by family and a large number of his friends.

Our thoughts go out to his family.

## PUZZLE SECTION

These pictures were kindly sent by an overseas alumnus who spotted this plant in Spain.

Anyone know which plant it is?



**Matches section** - none officially reported but Nick Pullinger got married to a Norwegian lady in the summer.

**If you recently got married – do please send a phot and brief details.**



## Letters to the editors

We are always pleased to hear from you and hope to publish and respond to all comments.

1. **“Just read some of the memories of old pupils etc. and felt aching wave of nostalgia....” - JLK.** *Yes, and sooner or later all readers will be there!*
2. **“Many thanks for the newsletter (spelling mistakes and all!). We are all fortunate to receive the same “– PT Thank you and nice to know that my poor proof reading is noted and reported back. Embarrassing and clearly I need to improve editorial standards.**
3. **“Please can you amend my email address to”- CR.** *Always pleased to oblige and it helps us to keep in touch without causing any problems at work.*
4. **“Andy Davis not Roberts” – JL/RH.** *Yes, my ability to randomly pick incorrect names for alumni was quickly spotted and the correct name has been posted on a corrected version.*
5. **“A few of us who held a successful reunion some 18 years ago, are holding another one and we would welcome your help in spreading the word” –IL.** *As always we will help where we can but it would be nice to hear back from such reunions with alumni that we are so far not in contact with.*

6.



### Alumna inPressed?

Are you following me? **Angela Clarke** has written 4 best sellers Confessions of a fashionista, Follow me, Watch me and Trust me. now and possibly working on No.5?

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## FUND RAISING continues.



RPS continues to seek funding for the all-weather pitch.

[www.rpcp.co.uk](http://www.rpcp.co.uk) - Roundwood Park Community Pitch

We would like to extend our sincere THANKS to all those Alumni that have already donated and sponsored a tile.

The school needs to find a further £160,00 to repay/replenish the school reserves to help finance this wonderful and long anticipated facility.

Any level of donation is gratefully received.

### Staff changes (or not!)

After 40 successive years of teaching Science and A level Biology there still appears little chance that Paul Robert Barnett has any intention of retiring from Roundwood Park School or from teaching!

Rumour (a little bird?) says, he says, "another two years"!



His 'old 'boss, Christine Hood is an occasional visitor to the 'Alumni office and is able to keep us abreast of changes to and about many of the ex-staff with who she keeps in constant touch. We occasionally meet on Saturday mornings when wandering through the market in St Albans. She is well and as busy as ever.

There have been a number of staff appointments this term as a result of teachers leaving or reducing their hours and relinquishing posts of responsibility.

**Mrs Chloe Corrie, [2014-18]**, chemistry teacher and former Head of Chemistry, will be leaving as moving away from the area.

**Mrs Kirsty Maidment [July 2016-18]**, Head of Business & Economics is Also leaving at Christmas.

**Mr Nick Gray [2012-18]**, Head of Music is also leaving at the end of this term

**Jarrood Keegan [2008-18]**, Head of maths is also leaving at end of the Autumn term.

**Miss Lisa Vettese [Jan2017 –Dec 2018]** now works part time as a Cover Supervisor at the school but will leave at the end of this Autumn term.

## Meet the RPS 'Well Being' Dog



Bertie the Cocker Spaniel is being trained as a 'well being dog'. He is owned by Mrs Alex (nee Rowbotham) Gray and during the day resides in her office ( located where staff gent's toilets were.)

Children can, and do, take Bertie , for a walk around the school along with Mrs Gray. This is an initiative to aid 'well being' for students who are experiencing stressful times. Students enjoy being with Bertie and also help in his obedience training.

### **Sudden news.** Bertie moves on!

A heart breaking decision has been made that 'we' are not meeting Bertie's needs in school and that he needs an outlet to be the dog he was bred to be - basically he needs to run for hours everyday.

We have made some links with a charity who have connections with people who train sniffer dogs for the Police. If he is successful this would be the perfect life for Bertie, as he would be working and doing the thing he loves to do most - sniff.

### **A revamped convenience.**

All toilets, both for staff and for students have since been converted to unisex toilets. The design and finish of these was aided by some of the admin staff. A significant and large grant was secured to cover the cost of this redevelopment and refurbishment. And follows the recent successful grant application that was awarded to cover the reglazing of the entire school buildings.



## STOP PRESS

**Jamie Bozier** seen, alive and well, on St Albans market one Saturday.

**Rory Meldrum** also looking fighting fit is planning to move away from Harpenden to the south west.

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**Jenny (Durrant) Cohen** is alive and well and living locally.

**Dean Smith** is alive and well and continuing with his Window Cleaning business locally.

**Open Evening** on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September resulted in the usual rush to view the 3, soon to be 4, secondary school in Harpenden and RPS was first as usual. Good to see Alumni with their children looking round and in some instances noting just how much the buildings and facilities have grown and improved. It was good to catch up with the following alumni: **Fraser Tant, Jo (White) Benfield, Anna C, Nick Plimley** and **David Liddle**. Apologies if I missed anyone out.

One prospective parent bemoaned the fact that RPS **no longer** teaches hockey despite the new artificial pitch which has a multipurpose surface but that is, alas, not suitable for hockey. Still no suitable 'hockey' pitch in Harpenden!

**Lisa (Thompson) Stent (1988)** was seen leaving school one Wednesday morning and we enjoyed a few moments reminiscing of times gone by. Lisa and Oliver have two boys at the school.

**Bethan Donnelly (2012)**, Ph.D. student at the University of Bristol has offered to come in and talk about her chemical research to our sixth form chemists.

**CONTACT – Your news and views are greatly appreciated. Please continue to send in articles and photographs.**



Please contact us to BE ADDED to our / your Alumni Listings to UPDATE your existing profile.

or

PLEASE email us with a synopsis of what you would like to appear along with a photo (linkedin?) Please email [b.smith@roundwoodpark.co](mailto:b.smith@roundwoodpark.co).

Happy Christmas reading Ed: BMLS