



# ROUNDWOOD PARK ALUMNI Newsletter 33: March 2021

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



Page | 1

***PLEASE forward this newsletter to ex-Roundwood friends and encourage them to make contact to be added to our mailing list.***

## Editorial comment

The school continues to take government advice and to provide as safe an environment and as effective a learning facility as possible. The current MP, Mr Bim Afolami, has written to extend his thanks and best wishes for all the sterling work the staff have provided and endured during this time.

## Contact!

As circumstances change we would wish that all our alumni remain healthy and able to cope under these extended and difficult times.

We are keen to keep in touch with as many of our alumni as possible but as circumstances change so do email addresses. **PLEASE** keep us apprised of any contact details that change. Simply update your LinkedIn profiles or email: [b.smith@roundwoodpark.co.uk](mailto:b.smith@roundwoodpark.co.uk)

## Alumni News

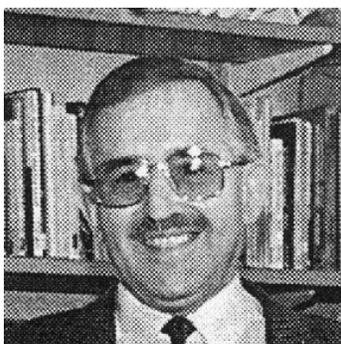


**British Science Week** (8-12 March) came at a difficult time with the return to school but help was on hand from RPS Alumna, Emily Pearson. She is currently studying Engineering at Durham. "I am also currently Team Principal of the Durham University Electric Motorsport team (DUEM). We have put together a video to meet Gatsby Benchmark 4 "By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers." The video provided was shown to students.

<https://duem.org/british-science-week-2021/>

## Do you have a story to tell?

Events across the globe will have a varying impact as a result of current affairs and perhaps your own personal experiences relating to these. WE would truly like to learn of your experience especially those living in other countries. Given the constraints of GDPR we would welcome any photos.



### **Mr Mike J Hoppe RIP**

It is with great sadness that I am informed by Ms Christine Hood, that Mr Mike Hoppe has sadly passed away.

Mike was a long serving Senior guiding figure for many years at the school. 1966-2000. After a lengthy period in a nursing home Mike passed away in March 2020.

A PE master, Geography teacher and later oversaw admissions from the primary school to Roundwood.

A great friend and colleague of Mr Roy Patterson and now sadly both no longer with us.

### **The ex-staff interview: Mrs Caroline O’Coy 2020**

#### **1. What did you study at University/College – why that subject in particular?**

I left school at the end of year 11 and went to the local college to study leisure and tourism. I came from quite a small village in the Cotswolds so there was not a lot of choice of courses to progress onto! I then went to Birmingham College of Food to study an HND into Culinary Arts which I later extended into a degree in Food and Hospitality. I was very unsure of what I wanted to do as a career and decided to opt for food studies as it was the subject I had enjoyed the most at school and cooking at home when I was growing up. I then went back to university when I was 25 to complete my PGCE in food and textiles to become a teacher. This was at Birmingham City University.



#### **2. Do you have any fond memories of your time in H.E.?**

When we were in college we had the opportunity to travel to Florida to research the tourism trade which was an amazing experience. When I was at uni we did a two week trip to Bordeaux in France to try all the finest restaurants, food and wine- it was great! During my HND, our second year was a work placement year which I spent working in two restaurants in Manchester. Manchester is such a vibrant city, I really enjoyed living there for the year.

#### **3. What made you go into teaching?**

I was working as a food inspector and finding this quite uninspiring. I started volunteering at a local school once a week to join in their cookery lessons and really

enjoyed in- it didn't feel like work! I did this for a year and throughout that time realised the was the route I wanted to change to.

**4. Have you ever considered or undertaken any other career path?**

Yes, after uni I worked in a pub in the kitchen and front of house. I gained my alcohol license (meaning I could run a pub) and did a course in restaurant management. I then went on to be a quality assurance food inspector for two years which involved investigating mouldy fruit and vegetables!

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

I trained in schools in Birmingham but RPS was my first job in teaching and have now been here 11 years! Roundwood Park stood out from the first time I saw it. The friendly staff, behaviour of the students and the lovely location was why I was so impressed on the day of my interview and have never wanted to leave.

**6. What aspects of your job at RPS do you especially enjoy and if you have to pick one thing that you most enjoyed what would it have been?**

I really like being a form tutor. I am in my 5th year with my current form and had two lovely forms before this. Seeing the students' progress through the school and getting to know them so well is really rewarding. I generally enjoy all the hectic, busy, day to day pace and also that I get to work with such lovely people every day. Staff at RPS are so kind and caring.

**7. Rumour has it you are married to a chef! Does this cause conflict in the kitchen?**

Ha ha, he is not a chef anymore, he designs menus' for well known restaurant chains. There is not usually any arguments but food is definitely a priority in our house and we like to eat!

**8. Have you organised many visits, field trips or non-curricular activities with the students. Which of these stand out in your mind?**

The last two years we have visited Thales End farm for our GCSE students which has been really good fun. I also enjoy the Masterchef days we organise each year during enrichment week. Although not organised by myself, before my children were born, I was lucky enough to go on a number of trips with the school. Going on the World Challenge Expedition to Ecuador in 2012 was a standout moment as it really took me out of my comfort zone. Experiencing the Galapagos islands was something I never thought I would do.

**9. Is it important to encourage boys to take an active role in food preparation/cooking?**

Very important. I'm really proud that student numbers for GCSE are now very much gender balanced and that boys want to take the subject. I think well known celebrity chefs have helped promote this and it is also pleasing that in design and technology, so many females now take product design. This is how it should be.

**10. How do you feel you made an impact at RPS in any of your roles at RPS?**

I feel I have been consistent in the delivery of food studies and am pleased that our GCSE numbers continue to rise. This year we started a post 16 course in food science and nutrition which has long been an ambition for me at RPS and I am really enjoying this and hope it will continue to run for years to come. I really enjoy being head of department and feel I have been able to successfully work towards moving design and technology forward as an ever changing subject. Finally, in 2019 I successfully won a bid to refurbish the food room at school, it is such a great environment now and feel this will have an impact on students learning for a long time in the future.

**11. What are your passions/hobbies or pursuits in your spare time?**

I enjoy going to the gym and keeping fit and healthy. I have two small children so at the moment there is not much space for any other hobbies until they are perhaps a little older!

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

I think I would do the same again. It is very hard work but ultimately very rewarding and I feel I am lucky to work in such an amazing school. I have a job that is never boring and allows me to develop life skills in students that will hopefully help them in later life. Particularly in the last year, I have felt very grateful that I have had job security and that I have been able to carry on working throughout the pandemic.

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

Hopefully someone who was kind and helped them achieve their goals.

### Staff News?

If you would like to find out any information about any teacher/member of staff, then please go to alumni/staff news on the school website. This information is patchy on staff that left many years ago and we would welcome any information regarding incorrect or missing members.

### General RPS information

More RPS news can be found on the fortnightly 'Roundup' newsletter on the school website <https://roundwoodpark.co.uk/roundup-newsletters/>



### Letters to the Editor

1. I instigated Wind Power at the University of Liverpool in 1986 after Chernobyl exploded and established the Global Solar Green Deal in 2014!

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/Will-France-Abandon-Nuclear-Power.html>

By Rory W. Meldrum BEng(Hons).

2. ... and you were my Chemistry teacher through my GCSE years. I am not sure if you will recall, but you had a nickname for myself and two of my friends - 'rag, tag and bobtail'. JR. *Yes – such an irritating habit to give people nicknames but hopefully I offended no one. I can recall 4 rather mischievous individuals that I named after the Marx brothers following assorted mischeivous activities in class and sent each to a corner of the lab!*
3. I passed my newsletter to my mother and she asked to ne added to the mailing list. CD. *Always good to hear from our alumni but The newsletter is sent out only to alumni but the newsletters are freely available on the RPS site and no password is needed to access the.*
4. I am writing to inform you of my father's passing. David French was a woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing teacher from 1962 until around 1967 whilst Mr Foxwell was head. He later moved into the primary sector and was head of schools in Luton and Poole. He passed peacefully at the age of 87. Kind regards Kate Vale (1983).  
*Thanks for this sad news about your father and one of Roundwood's former teachers.*

Page | 5

## Staff changes

**Mrs Jean Reynolds** (2004-2021), Long serving and popular Music Teacher.

**Mrs Lorna Wetherill** (2002-21). Deputy Head of Inclusion is leaving at Easter.

## STOP PRESS or latest News

**Chris Gell** (2005) and his wife were met by chance in Harpenden in December 2020.

I can testify that **Mrs Kirsty Briggs** (English teacher who now runs her own language business) makes the most amazing chutney; exchanged for apples, jam and squash.

**Dr Charlie Coleman** (2009) is at the Old Bailey (jury service) according to her Mum, **Mrs Kim Coleman**, who very patently explained who she was as the recipient of this information (me/ed!) was clearly, and as usual, not really with it!

According to the annual Christmas missive, I can report that **Mr Mike Chamberlain** (ex-science & 6<sup>th</sup> form tutor) and his wife **Angie** are both doing well in Queensland and avoiding the virus, flooding and fires.

**Alex Thomas** (2005) having first gained a BSc from Bristol University has continued his studies and has now complete his Ph.D. in Archaeology and Anthropology.

**Mrs Lynn Gibbs** (ex-Senior Science technician) is alive and well and contemplating a move away from the area, perhaps to be nearer daughter, Emma (alumna) or further(?) from son Matthew (alumnus).

In our regular 'pacing the streets in Harpenden' to keep active, we can report that **Bilal Skoien** (2010 ) is alive and well.

**Mrs Kate (nee Lewis) Callaghan**, Geography teacher and leader of many memorable field trips, remains active and well and WFH with remote learning until schools reopen.



**PLEASE** send in any information relating to your time with us or your recent news. The news & views you provide, along with any photos, are greatly appreciated by all our readers.

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



This landed on my desk many years ago and has since looked out over the garden. Many of us that had the privilege of coming into contact with / teaching so many students over the years are constantly reminded of many of them, even if we no longer see them or hear from them.

“I don’t see Cambridge United winning anything” often crops up on a Saturday!

***BMLS (Editor)***