



ROUNDWOOD PARK ALUMNI Newsletter 35: September 2021

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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.

Editorial comment

The school continues to adhere rigidly to government advice to maintain 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 difficult time.

Contact - help us to keep in touch!

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

Calling all Humanities graduates/ students.

Dear Roundwood alumni,

Several of you may remember me from your days at Roundwood Park. I continue to have the privilege of teaching here at Roundwood Park in my role as Head of Humanities... though I'm sure the students aren't as lovely as they used to be!!

I'm contacting you as I know many of you are past geographers, historians or PRE students. We're keen to build a Humanities display board of successful ex-alumni. As such, if you studied one of these subjects, or a related subject at university, we'd be grateful if you could get in touch by filling in the 5 question (90 seconds we hope!) Google Form below:

[Google Form Link](#)

In previous years we would have taken this information from Dr Smith's thorough alumni records, but we are now constrained by GDPR, so need to acquire your permission to present this information in school.

Secondly, if you have subject related expertise through your degree or your career, and would be happy to come into school to present to a group (or even an assembly!) of students, then please do get in touch. Students are typically more interested in outside speakers than their teaching staff. Please feel free to e-mail me on

a.porter@roundwoodpark.co.uk

Hope you are all well,

Best wishes,

Andy Porter

(Head of Humanities Dept.)

IN MEMORIAM

Alviar Cohen

June 2002 – 21st June
2021

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Alviar who developed T-cell Leukaemia at the age of 15. Crowd funding raised over £550k to support his care with GOSH/UCL. Alviar was a

supremely gifted student, immensely popular and outgoing. Following 5 A* A'levels and gaining a place to read Biomedical Sciences at St. John's college Oxford, he was one of Roundwood's finest.

Thanks to all those alumni that helped support 'Help Alviar' fund raising.
RIP Alviar.



ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

1. Saracens lay down Premiership title marker with emphatic 26-9 win over Bristol Bears on top-flight return.

Loosehead **Ralph Adams-Hale** is another of the newer names who look capable of reasserting Saracens as challengers, as Lozowski's accurate kicking took them 18-9 ahead in the third quarter.

2. Hospitality: Pubs will retain some social distancing.

Pete Mann, who runs three pubs in Hertfordshire, including The Engineer in Harpenden, said he had spent months talking to customers about what they wanted when restrictions lift.

He told the i newspaper: "we will ne allowing people stand and order at the bar again, we'll be a traditional pub in that sense, but I am going to keep one section for people who want to sit at a table and and use an app to order – some people are still concerned".

(Article courtesy of the i newspaper July 13, 2021)

| Ashton Gate teams | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------|
| Referee W Barnes (RFU) | | |
| BRISTOL | | |
| N Adeolokun | C Plutau | I Lloyd |
| 14 | 15 | 11 |
| 13 | P O'Connor | |
| 12 | A Letua | |
| 10 | C Sheedy | 9 A Uren |
| 7 | 8 | 6 |
| D Thomas | N Hughes | S Luatua |
| 5 | 4 | 1 |
| C Vuli | E Holmes | |
| 3 | 2 | J Woolmore |
| M Lahiff | H Thacker | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| R Adams-Hale | T Wollstencroft | M Riccioni |
| 4 | 5 | |
| 6 | N Isiekwe | T Swinson |
| J Wray | 8 | 7 |
| | B Vunipola | B Earl |
| A Lozowski | 10 | 9 |
| N Tompkins | 12 | A Davies |
| 13 | D Morris | |
| 11 | 15 | 14 |
| R Segun | E Obatoyinbo | A Lewington |
| SARACENS | | |
| Replacements: Bristol 16 W Capon, 17 Y Thomas, 18 J Armstrong, 19 D Attwood, 20 J Heenan, 21 H Randall, 22 S Bedlow, 23 J Bates | | |
| Saracens 16 K Pifeleti, 17 R Barrington, 18 A Clarey, 19 C Hunter-Hill, 20 S Reffell, 21 J Simpson, 22 M Vunipola, 23 B Harris | | |



Ed. We have enjoyed several visits in the transformed garden with their smart new hubs at The Engineer.

3. Harpenden's Olympic hero, Richard Fox, watches daughter win gold



Australia's Jessica Fox during the Women's C1 Canoe Slalom Final at the Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in Japan.
- Credit: Danny Lawson/PA Wire/PA Images

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Australian star Jess Fox won gold in the C1 canoe slalom on Thursday and brought tears of joy to her Herts-born dad Richard, who himself was one of the world's top canoeists when he represented Great Britain through the 1980s and 1990s.



Richard Fox, who lived in Harpenden in his younger years, attended Roundwood Park Primary School and St Albans Boys Grammar which later became Verulam School. At the age of 11 Richard started to attend his father's canoe rolling sessions at Cottonmill swimming baths.

In 1998 he moved to Australia to take up a position as the National Head Coach for the Sydney Olympics and played a key role in ensure it that canoeing was kept as an Olympic sport for future Games.

Richard, who was selected to represent Great Britain in the 1992 Olympics, returned to the UK prior to the 2012 Games to visit the Lee Valley Whitewater facility and during his visit, he told the Herts Ad how he discovered a place on the River Lea in Wheathampstead to practise canoeing.

He said: "I used to knock on doors of people living near the river to ask if I could leave my kayak with them, because my parents couldn't take me every morning. There was an old man, who lived right by the river, who said 'yes' and I used to mow his lawn and left my kayak in his shed.

"The river is shallow, narrow and flat but it is where I developed my skills. I used it for two-and-a-half years. No one would have known; it was in a very discreet area, and there was never a big group because I did it before or after school. I was extremely motivated."

Richard actually commentated on his daughter Jess's race this week for Australia's Channel 7 and fought back tears as she raced to finish line

He managed a 'wow' as he wiped away his tears as he described his daughter's performance as "beautiful".

Jess, 27, who had already won a silver and two bronze medals across the 2012, 2016 and now 2020 Games, replied: "I love you too. I can't hear everything but, thank you for all the love, the support, the messages.

Her dad celebrated the victory with a glass of Champagne in the studio, toasting a gold medal that seemed to have slipped through Jessica's fingers when she took bronze in an error-riddled performance during the K1 final on Tuesday.

"It's unbelievable," Richard told Channel 7 News. "It's the C1 event, the first time in the Games. It's the race she had to win."

Courtesy of Herts Advertiser by Joe Colman July 30, 2021

QUERY?. I remember Rachel Fox in my A level chemistry class in 1987/88. She was a keen and accomplished canoist then. Is she Richard's sister?? Anyone know or kept in touch?

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Tom Webster () writes YEAR/PHOTO

From 2016-2020 I was working for Nanyang Technological University Singapore, conducting research into autonomous (self-driving) road vehicles. While out there I fell back into the healthy habit of cycling regularly and enjoyed competing in some cycling events in Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. I am now back in London doing broader intelligent/future mobility work at the Connected Places Catapult.



The STAFF INTERVIEW

Andrew Porter
Head of Humanities

. **Sept 2005** – present.

1. Is it true you attended St Georges School?

I am indeed an Old Georgian... however, I'd like to quickly state that I'm now very much a part of the Roundwood Park furniture. I'm told I've been here for 17 years and all too often I get ex-students aged 30+ greeting me in the street or down the pub. On the weekend a gentleman told me that I gave him his first start in the year 7 football team. This is somewhat of a sad reminder of my age, but do keep saying hello; it's great to hear how you are doing and the different paths you have taken.



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

I studied geography at university. I've always been interested in how the world works and our impact on it. This feels all the more pressing today as the global population swells and our global emissions continue to climb. I also played A LOT of sport and frequented one or two bars and pubs too. I enjoyed my course, but reflect on why we only had 9 hours of contact time a week. Life is somewhat more complicated with a full-time job and a family!

3. What made you go into teaching?

After university I was at a loss as to what to do. I considered accounting and was offered a job in ship broking. Needless to say they would have been more financially lucrative options! Instead, after a year of 'temping' I decided to apply for primary teaching. Alas, the course was full so trained to become a secondary school teacher instead.

4. Have you ever considered any other career path?

Yes... about ten years ago I considered retraining as a pilot. I even went so far as passing the initial pilot testing. However, this made me reflect on what I'd miss about teaching. As such, I decided to stick around in teaching. After all, 17 years at one school isn't nearly as many as Mrs Moxham.

5. Why did you choose Roundwood Park School and have you ever worked in another school or any other industry?

I didn't enjoy my teacher training. I was placed at the second worst school in the country at the time with only 17% of students achieving 5A*-C grades at GCSE (I know its strange numbers now). Indeed, after a year I was going to go get a job in the city. However, I was living at my Mum's house, which is just a ten-minute walk from school. The job at Roundwood came up and I felt I had no option to apply. 17 years later and I guess the rest is history...

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've always enjoyed getting to know the students; learning about what makes them tick and supporting the range of different personalities you we come across in teaching. Above all else, I feel the art of being an effective teacher is building positive working relationships with students. It's a privilege.

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

I've always loved fieldtrips. The limitation of geography is that you can't bring the world into your classroom. Fieldtrips enable the geography teacher to go into the world. It's great to see students begin to 'make sense' of the physical and human world around them. Aside from the 'geography' it's also a chance to get to know the students on a different level. 'Back in the day' we used to take students to Portugal on an annual basis, whilst today, when Covid isn't rearing its ugly head, we go to Liverpool. Spending time with students and staff on these trips has provided some fond memories.

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

The summer expeditions really stand out. What a privilege it is to go away with a group of young people and fellow member of staff. I've led expeditions with Mr Geraghty (RPS legend), Mr Wilkinson, Miss Way (now Mrs Porter!) and Mr Wilkins. The trips to Africa (x2), Ecuador and Fiji have provided some unforgettable memories. The teamwork and bonds you build and develop on these expeditions are simply priceless, not to mention the experiences and places we visited. Whether it be visiting Vic Falls, going on Safari, white-water rafting, venturing up mountains, trekking through the rainforest or taking part in charitable work... I loved all of it. Whilst in many ways I was still 'working' on these trips, I can honestly say they were all some of the best times of my life.

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

More than anything, I'd like to think I made an impact in the classroom. That I've encouraged students to understand the world they live in, and think in a different way. Hopefully this has enabled students to achieve positive exam outcomes and even led some students to continue studying geography further at A-level or University.

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

I still love sport, particularly football and remain an Arsenal season ticket holder (sorry Spurs fans). I attend the gym two or three times a week to retain some sort of fitness, though can't keep up with these youngsters that increasingly seem to train everyday! We (myself and Mrs Porter) also have a baby girl called Ava. She's very much a 'lockdown baby' and will be one in November. Needless to say she's a Daddy's Girl 😊 She's a joy... and pain in the arse at times too. In some ways, she's like my year 9 geography class. But more joyful.

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

More than anything, I'd like to be remembered as a supportive teacher who knew their students. Leaving some sort of a legacy is the greatest privilege of teaching; I'm not sure I could have worked in a different job and 'simply' generated revenue for a company. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this, I ultimately opted to teach because I cared about young people and felt I could enthuse a future generation of learners. If I achieved this in any regard, I guess I've done my bit!

Future Staff Interviews. Let us know if there is a particular teacher you would like to read about.

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

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1. Hi, thank you for the latest newsletter.

I just wanted to write in to thank Naomi for her piece about her dad, Mr Fisher. I was in her sister, Rebeccas year, and loved and was terrified of him in equal measure! He made history so much fun! He made the boring seem exciting and involved everyone in his class. He was an amazing teacher and Naomi and Rebecca should be so proud of him for what he gave to all his students. He is genuinely one of the fondest memories I have of my time at Roundwood. He was such a character that no one would ever forget him. He is part of what inspired me to become a teacher myself!

Thank you Naomi for sharing your words and photo. Everyone always remembers the Good teachers, and I'll certainly never forget him (and his motorbike!)

Thank you. Sarah (nee Ainger) Challis (class of 2000)

2. I wish I lived closer as I'd love to come back and see the school now or talk to the students about working in finance then having a huge career change later on! My parents are still in harpenden and I often bring my young children up to walk past 'mummy's old school' when we visit. S. *Yes hopefully we can reopen visits but things are still uncertain.*

3. Good Morning

I am looking for some information regarding the schools Silver and Brass Band between 1963 and 1968. I attended the school between those dates and joined the band in the first week of attendance, playing B flat Tuba and then BB flat Bass Tuba The bandmaster was Mr Brian Knightly who also taught Technical Drawing and was a Sergeant in the Salvation Army. During the years I was in the band, we became very successful and competed most weekends in national competitions, winning many trophies including, if memory serves, National Youth Championships. We played to school assembly on Mondays and Fridays, usually to display our successful test piece from the just won competition. We really were an outstanding band of boys.

During the competition off season we performed at many local garden parties, village fetes and outdoor carol services to raise funds for the competition season. For 2 years, I believe 1966 and 1967, we played a concert in the Harpenden Public Hall to full houses for 2 nights. On those occasions I know that there was at least one cine film with sound track made by a Mr Battersfield, plus a sound only recording of the concerts. There were also films of us carolling in the Town centre in the snow. These recordings are also what I am trying to track down.

I wonder if the school has retained any of the competition trophies, shields or certificates, has any written records or recordings archived away? Any information would be welcome.

I do know that Brian Knightley retired from teaching and became a Salvation Army missionary in Africa and if he is still alive, would be in his late 80's at least. At least one of the band boys joined the Royal Marines Band.

Thank you in advance for any information you can supply.

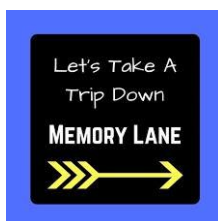
If you were part of this band or know of those that were please make contact with Tim via tfiservices@virginmedia.com

Yours Sincerely Tim Arnold

Staff changes

Mrs Sonia Papworth (21st April 2001 – 22nd October 2021). School canteen manager who oversaw and revolutionised the layout and food range at the school.

WEDNESDAY VISITS



Hopefully conditions may soon prevail which will enable us to return to a sense of normality and welcome alumni back to take a trip down memory lane to see the changes that have occurred since they left and the people and places/things they remember.

If you would like to visit please email me and I will see what we can arrange.

STOP PRESS or latest News

Mrs Carol Jones (ex Head of Sixth Form, Economics and teacher of French) has retired at the end of this last summer term from her teaching position at a school in Guildford. Thanks for Christopher Jones for this.

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Mrs Chloe Corrie (ex Head of Chemistry) continues as a teacher of chemistry at Clarendon Academy but is about to move into the private sector still teaching chemistry.

Dr Kathryn Bailey (Science teacher) is alive and well and recently encountered at that great meeting place in Harpenden, otherwise known as the recycling centre in Darkes Lane.

A recent visit to RPS just before the end of term to attend the Awards afternoon gave me the opportunity to visit the Geography department to meet up again with Andy Porter and Ruth Plowright ; they are both doing well and as enthusiastic as ever.

The RPS Awards afternoon in mid July saw many students being congratulated for their outstanding efforts in a variety of disciplines/subjects. Some staff were given awards in recognition of their long standing years of service to the school. These included Jenny Durdey, Michele Darvil (Tomlins) and a few others.



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



*Hopefully the door will be
open to visits soon
BMLS (Editor)*