



# **OL Newsletter**

## **ADVENT 2020**



# From the Headmaster

Dear Old Leicestrian,

When you read this newsletter, I shall have been in post for just over a year; the time has flown by, and I have been very happily occupied, supported by a team of outstanding, dedicated and caring colleagues.

One of my greatest privileges as a head is to see my pupils and staff doing remarkable things - whether in their academic pursuits, their music, their sport, their drama or their service to the community (both in school and in the wider world). The Upper Sixth can sometimes be awkward towards a new head, as they know the school far better than he or she does and they don't want someone coming in and interfering with the way things run! Well, I have actually been most heartened by the warm welcome I have received, as well as by the desire to work together to make the school an even better place for all its members. LGS remains a 'grounded' school, where pupils are keen to do and be their best, and to grow naturally in self-confidence, emerging as generous and well-rounded young adults. Its culture of success stems partly from the very positive relationships forged between pupils and between pupils and staff.

Life in a school is wonderfully unpredictable, as we are dealing with so many human variables! I could not have predicted the two calls I received one week in November 2019. The inspectorate were running a little ahead of schedule, so decided to call for a compliance and educational quality inspection. We were delighted with the outcomes: the school was found fully compliant with the over-400 regulations by which we must abide, mostly relating to safeguarding, welfare and health and safety; and we received the highest grading of 'Excellent' in the two overarching categories of Pupils' Academic and Other Achievements and in Pupils' Personal Development. Inspectors spend most of their time with the pupils nowadays, judging just how effective our educational provision, policies and promises are – and they were



pleasingly very impressed by our young people. The second phone call came on the Thursday, from the Sunday Times, to say that we had been awarded the accolade of East Midlands Independent Senior School of the Year 2020. If the inspectors had been in any doubt, I was ready to give them this news before their departure!

As you will be aware, schools went into lockdown on 20th March, and I have been hugely impressed by the many creative ways in which staff and pupils across the Trust have benefited from a high-quality remote learning experience and strong sense of community – even whilst apart. Fresh challenges and new guidance have frequently come our way, but we have been nimble and adaptable in our response, sometimes virtually solving the insoluble! Senior pupils were offered a full timetable of lessons, tutorials, challenges and assemblies, making very good progress via a blend of videoconferencing and independent learning. The last two weeks of term saw online charity, well-being, arts and sports days, as well as work-related learning and university preparation in small groups in school. Our learning curve has been very steep, but staff rose very quickly to the technological challenges, nevertheless missing the fun of being in school.

As with many independent schools, we showed empathy for our parents in some very difficult circumstances, discounting fees, offering payment deferment and establishing a COVID-19 hardship fund, which benefited from the generosity of those who chose to pay 100%. With so many parents in the medical profession, we provided key worker provision for up to 80 children on a daily basis, and the LGS Design Technology department worked with some of these children over the Easter holiday to manufacture 11,400 visors for the NHS – which were very gratefully received.

With Trustees, we developed a new mission statement for the Trust, as well as new sets of aims for the two LGS schools:



An entry in the House Design a Rainbow Competition

Cover photo: Peace Garden outside the Library

The Leicester Grammar School Trust seeks to be an inspiring centre for co-educational excellence in academic and personal development, within a Christian ethos.

In order to fulfil this mission, the school aims to:

- Promote intellectual curiosity and academic excellence.
- Provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- Offer a rich range of co-curricular opportunities which enhance pupils' physical, cultural and personal development.
- Equip pupils with the self-belief, consideration and skills required for a principled and fulfilling life.
- Create a happy and mutually-supportive community of learners and staff, in which each individual is encouraged and enabled to do and be their best.
- Care for the mental and emotional well-being of pupils, and be proactive in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
- Welcome pupils of diverse backgrounds and faiths, nurturing their social and spiritual development.
- Foster a generous contribution to charity, community service and society.

With pupils, we chose the values which should inform our planning and underpin all our endeavours:

**RESPECT:** for self, others and our environment; kindness, courtesy, humility, tolerance, care, encouragement

**TRUST:** honesty, integrity, responsibility, self-discipline

**COURAGE:** determination, resilience, perseverance, commitment, enthusiasm, self-belief, challenge

**CURIOSITY:** independence, initiative, creativity, spark, self-awareness, scholarship

**COMMUNITY:** equality, service, empathy, compassion, collaboration, inclusiveness, selflessness

Very sadly, we recently lost a boy in Year 10 to cancer, after a very courageous battle. Tom formed a very special bond with his dog during his illness and, when he entered end-



of-life care, we decided to raise funds for Pets as Therapy. The response of our community was incredible, with almost £21,000 raised in just over a week. Tom was aware of the inspiration he had provided, and we shall be working with the charity to ensure regular visits to school by a therapy dog as a lasting tribute to him. Please hold his family in your prayers at this very painful time.

I was pleased to be approached by an OL, encouraging us to respond actively to the hugely important issues raised by the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. We had rightly already begun discussions in school, and it is vital that we build on these in a meaningful and sensitive way. You will find a statement on our website via this link: <https://www.lgs-senior.org.uk/news/?pid=21&nid=4&storyid=158>. We were able to focus on some of the issues during our September training day for staff, with the support of some BAME former pupils, whose views and suggestions we were keen to hear openly. We should learn from both past and present, and education is the obvious place for change to take root and affect lives in a positive way.

So, as in your day, there is always much to celebrate in a vibrant and happy community. Please never hesitate to pay us a visit; you will receive a warm welcome. I hope too that you will wish to join in our 40th anniversary festivities in 2021.

Best wishes,

John Watson

*Headmaster and Principal of Leicester Grammar School Trust*





## FAREWELL

# RETIRING STAFF



### Richard Longson

Richard Longson was sent an offer of employment on the seventh of April 1982, having come to an interview in half-derelict buildings just before the Easter holidays of that year. Since those times it has been quite a journey both for him, and indeed for the School. Richard has played a large part in the remarkable story that is Leicester Grammar School as it strove to fulfil its founders' vision of a Grammar School with a Church of England foundation for Leicester and Leicestershire.

In the early years he taught History and Divinity, also taking a rugby team and running a tennis team. He built a strong working relationship with Leicester Cathedral and established Leicester Grammar School's Guild of Servers and Sacristans. When the move to Great Glen was being planned he worked with others to establish the new Chapel of St. Nicholas at the new site. Developing the School community was a central part of his work as he set up the Charity Committee and began Social (Community) Service; developing the House system as Housemaster of Judges House and then Senior Housemaster. He was founder Secretary of the Old Leicestrians and did a great deal to ensure the success of that organisation. From 1983, Richard has been involved in the development of Careers and Young Enterprise in the School. taking on responsibility for its evolution soon afterwards. The quality of Careers at Leicester Grammar School received recognition beyond the school and he went on to be elected as President of the Institute of Career Guidance. He now feels that it is time to pass on the baton and we wish him a very happy retirement. The School owes Richard a great deal.

Ron Berry



### Dr David Maddock

David Maddock arrived at LGS from Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Wakefield in 1993. Having started his time with LGS at the city centre site he oversaw the successful move to the new school.

Under his leadership the number of students studying Art at GCSE and A Level greatly increased, largely as a result of his enthusiastic promotion of the subject. Lunchtime talks, trips to enrich the learning of all age groups and exhibitions from external artists ornamented the School under his direction. Dr Maddock championed the exhibition of examination students' work. Under his leadership the annual Summer Show developed into a cherished and much anticipated event for students and their families; his collaboration with the Design and Technology Department and the Music Department led to many memorable evenings for students, parents and staff. Recently Dr Maddock arranged the exhibition of large-scale sculptural works around school, an exhibition of Chinese art work and one of local artists including the highly regarded Paul Wright.

In most recent times Dr Maddock completed his History of Art PhD, leading to the publication of his book 'Roger Fry, Clive Bell and American Modernism'.

As organiser of the LGS cross-country club for many years he went on to run marathons and half-marathons. Dr Maddock's contribution to the life of our school has been prodigious. His development of the Art and Design Department and introduction of Ceramics and the History of Art have helped to ensure the future of Art at LGS.

Sally Hayward



### Christina Fearon

Christina Fearon joined the Biology Department in 1998, initially to teach Biology but also Chemistry, Physics and Maths. She has contributed significantly to the life of the School and she will be fondly remembered not only for her inspiring, assiduous and comprehensive teaching but for all the other contributions she has made. Pupils recognise that she takes an active interest in them as people not just as an exam statistic. Countless tutees have benefited from her astute advice and careers' guidance. Her natural constituency was the biologists and medics but she was equally at home dealing with an application to read English at Oxford or one to read Law at Harvard. She tirelessly gave of her time, often during the holidays, mentoring pupils, sometimes for years after they had left LGS. A genuine academic, Christina maintained her passion for genetics and managed to pass this enthusiasm on to generations of pupils, many of whom have become professional biologists. She has been a major influence in the Biology Department, organising the Sixth Form Olympiads and the Middle School Challenge as well as setting the standard for displays, practical work and resources.

She is a great supporter of the house system and is ever present at functions often working behind the scenes to support the events. She has attended many OL events and is a stalwart of the year group reunions at school and the London social evening. In short, she epitomises everything that is strong and positive about teaching, being fiercely academic, caring, generous with her time and an advocate for those pupils in need of a helping hand. Generations of pupils will remember her with great affection. Teachers like Christina are rare and she leaves LGS for a well-earned retirement with the best wishes of all.

Tony Duffield

Retired Head of Biology



## Dr Sarah Ewers

Sarah Ewers joined the Biology Department at LGS in January 2007 to help us out of a crisis. In her own inimitable style she has continued to deal with whatever crises have befallen us subsequently. Never less than totally committed, she has produced excellent resources, trialled and implemented new practicals, enthusiastically participated in our wonderful French field trips, and been instrumental in setting up and running various school activities and societies, including GCSE revision classes, and the genetics and horti clubs. She has brought inventiveness and enterprise to various STEM activities. For many years now she has organised the annual visit of Year 6 pupils from St. Cuthbert's Primary School in Great Glen for their forensic science morning. She has made a large contribution to the musical life of the school especially through her membership of the choir. Descriptions of her initiatives and all the work she does for the school could go on but surely her lasting legacy will be felt by the individuals she has nurtured. She has never been too busy to arrange one-to-one sessions, often on a regular basis, to support students with their studies. We all wish Sarah a much-deserved happy and healthy retirement.

Christina Fearon



## Jacky Hutchinson

Jacky Hutchinson joined LGS in 2009, having spent a significant element of her career in local state schools. As part of her interview, I remember observing a Netball lesson and it quickly became clear that not only were we seeing a highly competent, professional teacher but also someone who we were very keen to have join the department. We were delighted that she accepted !

Jacky took on the role of Head of Academic PE and has devoted huge amounts of time and energy to developing this side of the department's work. Her dedication to the students she teaches and the care, consideration and support she provides them has been second to none. This has extended to her colleagues who have benefitted hugely from her wise, knowledgeable advice and experience on all matters relating to the teaching of both GCSE and A Level PE. By nature, Jacky never wants a fuss but I know how proud she is of her children – Rebecca and George, both of whom attended LGS and have gone on to successful lives. Hopefully she will now have a little more time to spend with them and maybe also run a few more half marathons?

Achieving the best academic results across the school for the department in both the 2019 and 2020 summer public examinations has been a testament to Jacky's commitment to achieving the very highest standards and will be a very hard act to follow.

Jacky - we won't be happy until we see you accompanying one of your dogs as it wins Best in Show at Crufts !!

Chris Howe, Director of Sport.

## WE ALSO SEND BEST WISHES TO THOSE MOVING ON TO PASTURES NEW



## Shirley Stout

At Christmas 2019 the MFL department, and Leicester Grammar as a whole, had the very hard task of saying au revoir and auf wiedersehen to Frau Stout.

Shirley Stout joined LGS in 2011, when she came as Head of MFL. She immediately transformed the department, amongst other things introducing the German Exchange and widening the format of the Year 9 trips

on offer. Her arrival was described as an explosion of positivity that made the MFL Department what it is today; a vibrant, strong and happy team who love working together. After her work on eating disorders with the charity Tastelife, she joined the PSD team. When she left "the best department ever" (her words, honestly), MFL colleagues variously described Shirley as "friendly, supportive, positive, fun loving, motherly, funny, wise, always encouraging, frequently effervescent and mildly crackers."

Shirley has moved to teach part-time and much closer to home: her new school has certainly gained a great teacher, caring mentor and wonderful friend, who had a tremendous impact on staff and pupils at Leicester Grammar.

Katharine Douglas (née Staunton)  
MFL Dept / OL '92



## Peter Lowe



## Jess Copley



# Obituaries

## Emma Tucker

OL '88

We were deeply saddened to learn of the recent death of Emma Tucker. Emma joined LGS in 1981, a member of the School's inaugural Year 7 cohort (to use modern parlance), and from the outset she thrived on the opportunities and stimulus of LGS life, both academic and extra-curricular. Emma made an impression on everyone who met her. She has been variously described as "strong-minded," "a character", "a one off" and "definitely her own woman" with her own views on life, the universe and everything (as the saying goes). Emma left LGS to take up a place at Magdalene College, Cambridge to read Classics, later changing to Archaeology and Anthropology, but she was unable to complete her degree due to severe mental illness. She was later diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis and it was from this that she died on 11 October 2019, her 50th birthday.

Emma's parents would like to thank all those who attended her funeral or who sent messages of condolence. They would also like to thank the wonderful staff at the London Road Neurological Unit who looked after Emma with such great care and compassion for the last three years of her life.

The photograph shows Emma in the school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1985, with David Earley and Andrew Tipple

## Sarah Rosemary Smith

(nee Chard) ...OL '00

Sarah Rosemary Smith (nee Chard) ...OL '00 aged 37, passed away on Saturday 28th September 2019 in the Leicester Royal Infirmary after a 5 year battle with cervical cancer. Sarah was a much-loved daughter, sister and wife, who touched the lives of lots of people in many different ways. She will be remembered for her cheerful, fun-loving and caring nature and is sadly missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Sarah attended LGS between 1993 and 2000, her proudest moment being when she received the Headmaster's Prize at Speech Day from Mr Sugden. She worked as a Finance Officer at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, where she met her husband, Mark. She then joined The Lionheart Academy Trust in Oadby as a School Business Manager.

Sarah always hoped that something good would come out of her illness. She was an ardent supporter of Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust and The GEMS Charity Leicestershire; fund-raising events since her passing have so far donated over £3,000 to these good causes. Her family would like to thank everyone for their kindness and generosity.

## Kendal Simmonds

Ken Simmonds, member of the English Department who died on 14th Sept 2019, was an anomaly. A Welsh man who sported a leek or a daffodil on appropriate days, he always held to the truth that Dylan Thomas was 'The Bard' and Shakespeare only of secondary consideration in the great canon of literature. Despite this he rose to be a Head of English in Spencefield School in Leicester before joining the English Dept at LGS under Mr. Kidd, an Irishman who thought James Joyce was 'The Bard' and Irish rugby only played by men who were in some way more than mortal. Ken Simmonds had qualifications in Geography and English and spent some of his war years teaching Italian prisoners of war to play rugby. His belief was that rugby for the Welsh was an art form - ballet in boots - for the English mere combat.

In his time at LGS (when it was in the city centre) he encouraged many pupils to read widely and to see the syllabus for external exams only as a springboard to a wider appreciation of the written word. He was a strict disciplinarian in the classroom but enjoyed nothing more than to be led discretely to a 'red herring' for fruitful open discussion.



Emma Tucker (left)



Sarah Rosemary Smith



Kendal Simmonds



Rosemary Gill

For many ex pupils Ken Simmonds's contribution was first and foremost to share his love and enthusiasm for all that he taught and to reap the enjoyment of seeing his pupils come to share his ideas while at the same time developing their own.

Malcolm Gray, Retired Member of English Department

## Rosemary Gill

Many of you will remember Rosemary, who was a happy and helpful member of the reception staff in the early years of the School. We send our sincere condolences to her husband Stuart and her daughters Caroline and Jenny who are themselves OLs.





Rob White, Rupa Nehra, David Herbert, Jo O'Carroll



Rosemary Hall, Liz Heard, Natalie Graham, Duncan Willis

## REUNION

### 25th Anniversary Reunion for the Classes of '94 and '95

Nick Ralph contacted us early in 2019 to ask if we could arrange for a reunion to take place of his year group to mark the 25th anniversary of their departure. As a result it was decided to hold a reunion on 14th September 2019 in the Richard III Visitor Centre. If anyone would like us to arrange such an event for their year group in the future, please don't hesitate to ask. Here are some photographs of what turned out to be a very happy and memorable evening. My apologies to those who attended the event but who do not feature in the photographs.



Taryn Ward, Matt O'Kane, John Watson



Matt O'Kane, Liz Heard, Natalie Graham, Sarah Beresford (née Larter), Taryn Ward



Duncan Gray, Simon Redman, John Watson, Nick Ralph, Verica Djurdjevic, David Herbert



Rupa Nehra, Jo O'Carroll, Judith Hughes, Ian Tailby, Rosemary Hall, Chris Wesley

## Helen Tookey (OL '87)

# A published poet

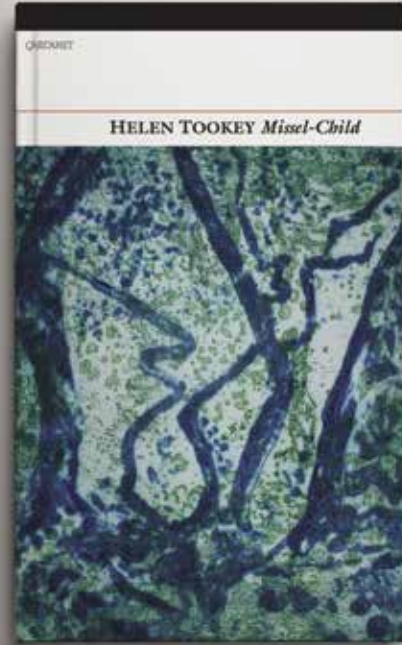
Lecturer in Creative Writing at  
Liverpool John Moores University

I studied English, French and German at A-level. I'd always loved reading, and I enjoyed learning languages, but beyond that I had no clear idea what I wanted to do. At some point during sixth form I became interested in thinking about how the language we speak shapes our experience (and how different languages therefore shape slightly different worlds), and one of my teachers perceptively suggested that I might enjoy studying philosophy. He was right. I went to Sheffield University, initially signing up for a joint degree in English and Philosophy, but I enjoyed philosophy so much that I dropped English after the first year. After Sheffield, I did a Masters in Philosophy at Cambridge, then worked in publishing for a few years. By this point I'd become interested in feminist theory and experimental writing – so I went back to university again, to do a PhD in English. It was also around this point that I started thinking more seriously about my own creative writing, and I began to get interested in contemporary poetry, which wasn't something I knew much about.



Over the next ten years or so, while I did a variety of jobs including freelance editing and university teaching, I worked hard to develop my poetry and to build connections with people in that field. I published my first pamphlet (*Telling the Fractures*, a collaboration with photographer Alan Ward) in 2008. My first full-length collection, *Missel-Child*, was published by Carcanet Press in 2014 and shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney Prize; my second Carcanet collection, *City of Departures*, was published in 2019 and was shortlisted for the Forward Prize. My poems often focus on unsettling moments, fleeting encounters; they've been described as 'haunting' and 'compelling'. I think I use the spaces of poems to try to explore exactly the same questions that interested me back when I was studying languages, and then philosophy – how do we encounter the world in all its strangeness, and shape it in language?

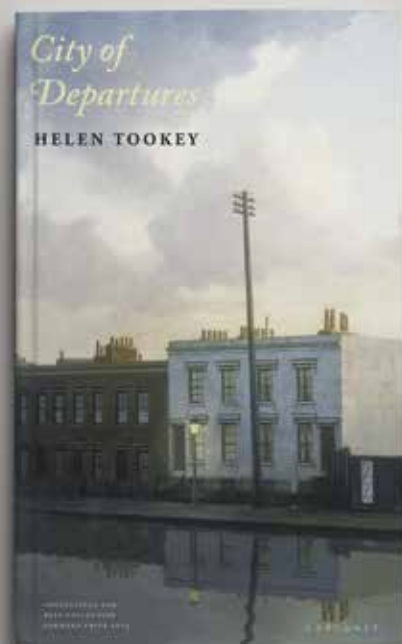
Since 2015, I've been a lecturer in Creative Writing at Liverpool John Moores University. Nothing about my 'career' to date has proceeded in a straight line, but when I look back, it's clear to me that my interest in languages, and then in philosophy, have continued to feed into my work. I would definitely say that even if your path seems to be more of a zigzag, or a spiral, than a straight line, don't worry – nothing is ever wasted.



## Quend-Plage-les-Pins

This place would be beautiful  
if it didn't exist. Well – the pines  
can stay, and the dunes, with their strange  
tenacious grasses; and the fine  
falling sand, and the waves,  
long and slanted, coming in  
and coming in.

But it wouldn't need  
this road, with its ribbons  
and pennants, its kites and crêpes  
and beach-toys. It wouldn't need  
this fairground, this car-park,  
this promenade. It wouldn't need  
a name. It wouldn't need us.





## Zain Rizvi - OL '13

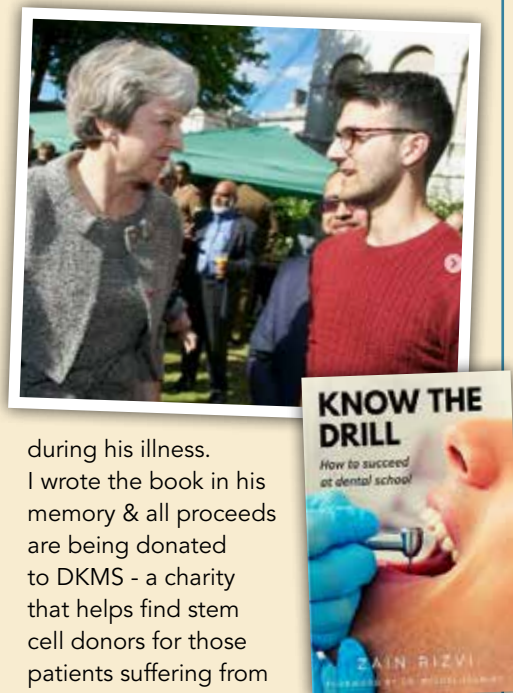
Upon leaving LGS in 2013, I began a BSc at Imperial College London where I got involved in the university political scene, trialled for a professional cricket contract with Surrey and managed to intern at the Bank of England. As you can see, I've always grappled with seemingly conflicting interests but keeping my options open resulted in a few opportunities following my graduation in 2016.

I applied to Oxford University's Young Muslim Leadership Programme in 2017 and was offered a scholarship which resulted in a role within the Cabinet Office - advising the Prime Minister's policy making unit on issues affecting young people in 2017-2018. This was an extraordinary experience and completely different to the career pathway that I was on. At the time I had been accepted onto a graduate-entry dental programme at Kings College London where I was studying full-time.

I recently graduated from dental school (June 2020) during which I was awarded Dental Student of the Year as well as

the 'Rising Star' scholarship from the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. I often get asked why I went into Dentistry given my interests in politics, cricket and writing and I don't shy away from providing a realistic answer: It provides me with the flexibility and financial cushion that I need to pursue the range of interests I have outside of my profession. I'm also extremely passionate about the field itself. The fact that it provides a hands-on creative outlet for those who want to treat patients on a daily basis makes it the best profession in the world. It's allowed me to launch education initiatives (The London School of Dentistry), write a book (Know The Drill: How to succeed at dental school) and pursue political and sporting ambitions.

There's a particular story regarding the book I published recently: "Know The Drill: How to succeed at Dental School" that is close to my heart. My uncle Ali Rasheed was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2016 and passed away last summer from the condition. His battle with leukaemia coincided with my journey through dental school and was particularly significant due to the numerous dental issues he suffered



during his illness. I wrote the book in his memory & all proceeds are being donated to DKMS - a charity that helps find stem cell donors for those patients suffering from blood cancers. The book itself is for dental students and details everything they need in order to lay the foundations for a successful career and is available on Amazon. If there are any students you know who may benefit from the book then please consider gifting them a copy - otherwise donations can be made to DKMS via their website ([www.DKMS.org.uk](http://www.DKMS.org.uk)) as well.

## Andrew McKinley (OL '00)

### Introduction to Contextual Maths for Chemistry

"Maths" – a word which is likely to strike fear into the heart of almost any undergraduate student not explicitly studying the subject. Yet the reality is that everyone needs a grounding in arithmetic; and for students studying physical sciences, mathematics is an essential tool for building and understanding scientific models. In recent months, the whole population has been exposed to exponential functions and logarithmic plots as we try to comprehend the scale of a pandemic sweeping the globe; however without understanding how to use these appropriately, it is easy to misunderstand the data presented to us.

The use and application of mathematics is essential for students progressing to study science at university. However with fewer students having A-level Maths there is a widening gap in undergraduate science. Further than this, it is common for students who have studied A-level Maths to struggle in relating the abstract "x" and "y" terms to concrete "distance" and "potential" terms describing the chemical bond.

"Introduction to Contextual Maths in Chemistry" is our attempt to meet these needs as part of a new series from the Royal Society of Chemistry – the Chemistry Student Guides – in which students are involved right from the start of the

authoring process. Through focus meetings with students, they guided us in the topics to cover, advising on the areas they find particularly troublesome, as well as helping us find the right 'voice' for the book. Their comments were vital in the writing of this book and much of their feedback is present as "hints, tips and tricks".

Too frequently we hear the complaint "maths is hard". However we contend that this difficulty comes from its abstract nature. By framing the maths in a chemical context, showing how the maths is used for modelling processes in chemistry, we hope to ease students through the transition to university science and find clarity in the often abstract world of mathematics.

**Dr. Andrew McKinley (OL '00), University of Bristol, May 2020**

"Introduction to Contextual Maths in Chemistry" (Dr. Fiona Dickinson and Dr. Andrew McKinley) is due to be published by the Royal Society of Chemistry on 1st September 2020, current events notwithstanding.



# Susanna Herbert (OL'98)

## Successful TV Producer and Actor



I stepped out of my trailer in Latvia dressed as the Empress of Russia and looked up at the beautiful Rundale Palace. It was surrounded by a film crew having lunch in the sunshine and a gaggle of extras in period costume replete with corsets, petticoats, epaulettes and heavy moustaches. I almost burst as I realised "I'm really doing this!"

Playing Empress Alexandra, the Tsarina of Russia, in the Netflix original series "The Last Czars" was - to pardon the cliché - a dream come true. But it didn't come easily.

Since raiding my family dressing up box as a five-year-old, I had always wanted to be a performer and was a regular on both the school and local theatre stages. But I was also very academic and rather than going to drama school at the age of 18 I decided to go to the University of Oxford to read History and Spanish. After finishing my degree, I remember being torn between applying to drama school - was being an actor just a pipe dream? - and going into the television industry to produce documentaries. I chose the latter - but after just a few months - I realised I had to give my childhood dream of acting another go.

Luckily, I was accepted into The Oxford School of Drama - a tiny drama school in the countryside by Blenheim Palace, now famous for its most royal pupil - Claire Foy. But after graduating I struggled to get an agent and discovered that the world of acting would be a marathon and not a sprint.

It was another four years before I was taken on by an agency - IAG. I remember jumping for joy and thinking "life is going to change now!"

My dual career started to fall into place. For many months of the year I produced popular television shows like "What On Earth" (Discovery

Science) or "Escape From a Nazi Death Camp" (PBS/Nat Geo) and in between I enjoyed a variety of acting gigs - including playing Stanley Tucci's wife in zombie horror flick "Patient Zero" and touring the country with Theatre Royal Bath's production of "After Miss Julie", starring Helen George.

But it was when a Series Producer at October Films offered me a job as a director on a Discovery Channel drama documentary called "Suspicion" that things really did change for me. I hadn't so much as been in an edit suite before. The gamble paid off and I fell in love with directing.







For the next 18 months, my acting career took a backseat as I built up my directing experience. And then one day, while sitting in an edit suite finishing off an episode of the Discovery ID crime series, "See No Evil", I got a call from my agent letting me know I had an audition for a new Netflix show about the fall of the Romanov dynasty. I was going up for the role of the sister of the Empress of Russia. I remember sitting in the waiting room of the audition frantically altering the script for "See No Evil" which was nearing a critical deadline. The distraction must have stood me in good stead for the casting, because amazingly a week later I was called back for a second audition - this time for the lead role of Alix - the much-maligned last Tsarina of Russia.

The series has been a huge success with tens of millions of viewers worldwide. I got an American agent off the back of the series and once I've got further through my current project - bringing up a baby - I'll be back on the bandwagon, interweaving directing and acting once again. But until then, life is about feeding, changing nappies and a daily walk in the park with the dog!





Dominic Veall (OL '14)

## Musician & Composer

**Finalist in BBC Radio 3 Christmas Carol Competition 2019**

After leaving LGS, I studied Music and was a choral scholar at King's College London, graduating with a first class degree in 2017, majoring in Composition. I subsequently embarked on a freelance year as a singer, pianist, and cellist, occasionally writing and arranging music. During this time I was a choral scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields, and All Saints Church, Fulham, where I sang solos in the live BBC 1 Christmas Day Broadcast in 2017. I also began accompanying music classes and exams, teaching individual students, and occasionally playing cello in theatre pit bands.

In 2018 I started my MMus degree in composition with academic and choral scholarships at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, based in Greenwich, London, while continuing to engage with various freelance work. The style of my writing here has ranged from the more commercial to the avant-garde, with my portfolio including pieces involving screaming at the cello, and creating "aleatoric" chance scores. I was a finalist in a chamber ensemble composition competition, and a winner of the chapel choir composition competition, and I am completing my degree in June 2020, with a 40-minute work for choir and orchestra.

I have enjoyed, and continue to enjoy writing both student and professional commissions, including for the Smith Quartet, renowned clarinetist Heather Roche, wind ensembles, and various choirs. I have been published as a composer, arranger, and transcriber, in Tetractys Publishing, Novello, and Hal Leonard.

After encouragement from my tutor, I entered the 2019 BBC Radio 3 Christmas Carol Competition: a challenge to set Imtiaz Dharker's specially commissioned poem "Go to the Child" for choir. My entry made the top six out of nearly 400

**Go to the Child**  
An unaccompanied carol for SSAATB choir (with soprano soloist)  
This piece was shortlisted into the final of the BBC Radio 3 Breakfast Carol Competition 2019

Winds: Imtiaz Dharker

**Tender**  
♩ = 114

**DOMINIC VEALL**

SOPRANO: *p* Rise and go on a bit - ter night when hope lies fro-zen in the ground... hush, and *mp* *pp*

ALTO: *p* Rise and go on a bit - ter night when hope lies fro-zen in the ground... hush, and *mp* *pp*

TENOR: *p* Rise and go on a bit - ter night when hope lies fro-zen in the ground... hush, and *mp* *pp*

BASS: *p* Rise and go on a bit - ter night when hope lies fro-zen in the ground... hush, and *mp* *pp*

**Tender**  
♩ = 114

Piano (for rehearsal only)

**Chorus:**

S. *mp* hid-den out of sight... no liv-ing thing for miles a-round. *p* E - ven though the *mp*

A. *mp* hid-den out of sight... no liv-ing thing for miles a-round. *p* E - ven though the *mp*

T. *mp* hid-den out of sight... no liv-ing thing for miles a-round. *p* E - ven though the *mp*

B. *mp* hid-den out of sight... no liv-ing thing for miles a-round. *p* E - ven though the *mp*

**Piano:**

*mp* hid-den out of sight... no liv-ing thing for miles a-round. *p* E - ven though the *mp*

entries, judged by a panel that was chaired by Bob Chilcott. The carol was then recorded by the BBC Singers (conducted by Chilcott), and played across Radio 3 ten times in the week following the reveal. I was interviewed twice on the radio: once at BBC Maida Vale Studios for a live performance, and once over the phone. Despite not being the overall winner, it was an amazing experience, gaining me fantastic exposure and a brilliant recording. It was also performed at Leicester Cathedral during Midnight Mass, with hopefully many more performances in Christmases to come.





# Turning a passion into a career

Emma Rowbotham (OL '12)

The year I left LGS (2012) I deferred my place at university to gain some more industry knowledge. During that year I had my first screen experience, and got a walk-on role in the period drama 'The Mill' on Channel Four. Following this I performed in National Youth Music Theatre's 'Whistle Down the Wind' at the Rose Theatre in Kingston. These were both incredible opportunities that gave me a taste of the world and the industry I really wanted to be part of. I then went on to get my BA in Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. This degree gave me the knowledge and appreciation of not only the vast history of theatre and play text but also an understanding of the workings of every aspect of theatre, particularly behind the scenes. I then got a place at my dream drama school, Arts Educational, where I received my Masters in Acting after a very intensive year of training. I was then plunged right into the crazy, unsettling yet amazing world of being an actor in London - which definitely has taught me a lot about resilience so far!

I got into Theatre first at LGS. I grew up as a dancer predominantly, having never gone to any drama clubs, and was always extremely shy when it came to school plays at LGJS - I was really quite content being in the background. It was something about doing real drama lessons at LGS that ignited something and I realised that I really loved it more than anything

else I was doing at school (no offence to my other teachers!!). I gained a place in the National Youth Theatre, aged 15 and that was it - I had got the bug and didn't see myself doing anything else!

Shortly after finishing drama school, myself and fellow course member Bettina Paris set up our own theatre company, Abeille Theatre. We knew we wanted to run a company that creates new work and we had pitched an idea to a theatre for a play and, to our delight, they liked it and so we went from there! We previewed and premiered our first piece, 'Little Big Girl,' the August of that year and consequently worked on it for another year before performing it again at Waterloo East Theatre last June. We are currently working on our new play, working alongside a writer and composer and hoped to premiere it this September/October time - funding permitting! However, lockdown restrictions have obviously delayed this. As a company we also offer fun and affordable workshops for fellow creatives in London. Being the Co-Director of Abeille Theatre is extremely rewarding, and if there are any fellow London-based OL creatives, we would love to connect! You can find our company on Instagram/Twitter/Facebook - @abeilletheatre

We have also run a number of theatre workshops for LGS students



## *Warwick in Africa 2019*

### A Reflection on my Experiences

**Anthony Shaffu (OL '15), Mpumalanga, South Africa**

I graduated from The University of Warwick this summer with a Masters in Mathematics & Statistics. For seven weeks in the Summer of 2019, I took part in a programme known as Warwick in Africa where I was part of a team of volunteers teaching Maths and English in an impoverished secondary school in rural South Africa.

Taking part in 'Warwick in Africa' has been the experience of a lifetime. I feel that it has given me a wider scope of experiences that I would otherwise struggle to obtain. Through teaching, rather than simply visiting, one gets to really feel and understand some of the country's culture and people's habits. I am able to truly appreciate the education that I've grown up with, especially in terms of its quality and facilities. It also gave me an insight into how determined people can be, regardless of circumstance: hard work, talent, and effort were still evident in the learners and teachers despite not having some of the resources that British schools are blessed with.

Seeing how friendly and supportive everyone was – particularly the teachers – as well as how keen the learners were to improve and push their comfort zones was inspirational. They blossomed even in just the seven weeks that I was there.

Some of the classes I taught would often "be their own teachers" and would explain their solutions on the board at the front of the classroom to everyone else. They would then bounce questions off each other and make sure that they understood: otherwise, they'd keep explaining or get additional learners to help. Also, some learners across all grades took part in the Mathematics Olympiad competition,

so they would often help each other outside of lessons. The sense of community and collaboration – of giving your time and energy to others when they need your help – was extremely potent in Acorn to Oaks School.

I taught mainly statistics and probability, and often made lessons fun for the learners in a way that their normal lessons weren't. I introduced games such as Bingo and Relay where they would still do mathematical questions, but in the fun framework of games rather than exercises out of a book. I would also often have to rejuvenate the learners when they were fatigued by spending a few minutes in the middle of the lesson doing stretches and yogic breathing, just to get them up and moving! Some of the learners would have to wake up as early as 4:30 to get to school for 7:00, so a lot of them would be exhausted in lessons. They enjoyed this too and would look forward to my lessons for these reasons.

I knew I was making an impact when I could see the interest in learners increase as the weeks went by, especially when it came to the games and stretches which they lacked in their other lessons. Then I came back to the UK and marked their final Measured Learning tests (I had to give them two similar tests – one at the start and one at the end – to measure my impact on their performance), and found that I'd increased the average mark in both my Year 10 and Year 11 classes by at least 20%. It was totally worth it!

I would like to sincerely thank the Old Leicestrians for the donation towards my fundraising target; you've enabled me to make a huge difference in deprived classrooms and have immense fun with the learners in their lessons.



## OL AWARDS

TOM CLAY (OL '13)

# BOTSWANA



Elective placements are the highlight of medical school for most students, and I can safely say that my trip to Botswana in April/May 2019 during my 6<sup>th</sup> and final year at UCL was no exception. The aim is to experience healthcare in a different environment to the NHS, whilst also getting a chance to be more hands-on than you are as a student back home. During my 6 weeks of placement, split between a paediatric ward and the A&E department in a rural hospital in Maun (Northern Botswana), I definitely achieved that. "You'd never see that in London" quickly became a catchphrase of our trip, which applied to various problems including staffing (for several A&E shifts there was only one doctor on duty – giving me plenty of chances to make myself useful!), HIV-related complications, no CT scanner or dialysis unit for 500km, some obstructive and dangerous local health beliefs and frequent problems with lab machines. In light of these potential barriers to good healthcare, it was inspiring to see how well the doctors handled complex cases with the resources that were at hand, and at no point during my placement did any of these difficulties lead to an acute crisis. Meeting some local students and comparing/contrasting life at medical school and beyond was a really interesting additional insight into the healthcare education system of Botswana too.

Travelling as a group of 5, we made the most of our weekends whilst on placement, with trips including Victoria Falls, a Mokoro boat trip in the Okavango Delta, and the awesome Makgadikgadi salt pans (familiar to any Top Gear fans after their Botswana special). We also had chance to travel to Namibia's incredible sand dunes and had a week of safari there in Etosha National Park, before heading down to South Africa to meet up with some friends on placement in Cape Town – where we managed to fit in a Super Rugby experience too! All in all, the amazing opportunities and truly unforgettable experiences that Southern Africa provided us with – medical and non-medical alike – really made this the trip of a lifetime.

Tom is seated in the centre of the group below



## OL AWARDS

George Hutchinson (OL '13)

### 27th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (Montreal)

I left LGS in 2013 to complete a Masters degree in Physics with Medical Physics at the University of Nottingham. Currently I am a PhD student funded as part of the Oxford Nottingham Biomedical Imaging (ONBI) Centre for Doctoral Training, where my research is focused around investigating blood flow within the human placenta using MRI.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 I attended the 27<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine in Montreal. I attended the conference to present some research I had undertaken as an aside to my PhD in Biomedical Imaging, looking at the effects of strong magnetic fields (like those used in MRI) on the head and brain. While MRI is a safe imaging modality and these fields cause no detrimental health effects, they can interact with other types of brain imaging such as Magnetoencephalography (thankfully shortened to MEG!). MEG imaging can produce maps of your brain activity by detecting and localising the



minute magnetic fields produced by naturally occurring electrical currents in the brain (think right hand grip rule A-level physicists!). By using a MEG scanner and testing people after exposure to a 3 Tesla MRI scanner we found that MRI exposure does cause an increase in 'magnetic noise' which can vary greatly between participants. This 'magnetic noise' is important for two reasons; firstly if you have an MRI scan and then within a couple of days have a MEG scan, then the data from the MEG scan will be of worse quality. Secondly it is believed this magnetic noise is caused by small iron particles which accumulate in the brain over time, and have been linked to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

## CAPE TOWN: Pretty or perilous? By Tej Pandya (OL '14)

All medical students have the opportunity to travel abroad as part of their studies, traditionally in their penultimate or final year. For me, it was an opportunity to go to one of the most aesthetic cities in the world and learn from doctors in a less developed setting. Cape Town is also known for high levels of deprivation and I was keen to experience the impact of this in the healthcare environment.

Cape Town's apartheid history has resulted in a divided and unequal society. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century large numbers of coloured and black citizens were forcibly displaced from the city centre into townships away from the coast (and tourist attractions such as Table Mountain and V & A Waterfront) and more importantly, employment. For those living in these townships, a breakdown in the community and high unemployment rates has led to an increasingly drug and criminal society, with an overstretched police and criminal justice system resulting in gangs having huge power within the community. As a result, for those working in the emergency department of the hospital, we were inundated with cases of stab and gunshot wounds, particularly towards payday at the end of the month, as well as a large number of sick medical patients with complications arising from chronic

HIV/TB infection (with the added bonus of staff and resource shortages). Despite the enormous workload, security risks and often senseless violence, I found staff were often more resilient and more upbeat than those in the UK, and there were huge lessons to be learnt about keeping up staff morale (taking regular breaks as a team and post night-shift breakfasts are simple practical examples) The experience from this trip has immensely contributed to my medical learning and whilst Cape Town is a stunningly picturesque city, it is the people and culture which I will remember in the years to come.





# Mindful Magic

Katie Hill (OL '03) Founder and Mentor Coach

## Emotional wellbeing and mindfulness for families and teachers

LGS had such a huge impact on me, especially with the life-long friendships I formed and the situations I encountered, which led to my passion for supporting children with their emotional wellbeing.

After leaving Sixth Form, I took a gap year in Australia, then headed to the University of Sussex to study Anthropology & Development Studies. I then worked in the charity sector for three years and eventually became a secondary school teacher. During that time, I saw the steep rise in students struggling with mental health issues. As a teacher, it was really hard to know what to do and I started off feeling quite useless.

However, having trained in mindfulness and meditation whilst on maternity leave, and having taught Buddhism A level for eight years, I wrote a programme called 'Mindful Magic' which I delivered in and outside of schools. Sessions were really popular and soon there was interest from around the country for similar community-based programmes. Within a year, I had trained 18 'mentors' to run Mindful Magic sessions around the world. They're such an amazing, supportive group of human beings and it's a privilege to work with them.



Mindful Magic is a way for children to access mindfulness in a fun, easy way. The aim is to provide them and their parents with tools that support emotional wellbeing now and in their future lives. As well as the community programmes, we have a new dedicated schools programme aimed at making teachers' lives easy. The toolkit enables them to integrate mindfulness into everyday school life and through detailed and fully resourced lesson plans.

I feel extremely lucky to have had such incredible support from the start at LGS that spurred me on to believe that anything really is possible.



At Mindful Magic we provide easy, fun and mindful tools that teach children and parents, how to effectively focus, breathe and simply be. It doesn't matter if your child is a cheeky, noisy wriggler or a quiet, non-talking teenager. Through the classes, we can learn to have a deeper acceptance, calm and clarity for life.

[www.mindfulmagic.info](http://www.mindfulmagic.info)



In September 2021 LGS will be 40 years old. We are planning to mark this with a series of events for OLs. We had hoped that we would be able to publicise our plans in this Newsletter. However, circumstances nationally have meant that no firm plans can be made. So please keep an eye on your inbox and the OL Facebook page for further information. We hope that by next summer the future will look much clearer and that we will be able to welcome a large number of you back during 2021-22 to celebrate this milestone.

# Careers Fair

The Careers Fair takes place every 2 years, with exhibitors from industry, finance and higher education coming together to give our students, and those from elsewhere, an excellent opportunity to see what is available for their future. Every year we are pleased that so many OLs agree to come to represent the companies that they work for. This gives our students a more personal point of contact and opportunity to talk over their options.

The School welcomes OLs to contribute to the next Careers Fair, which should be in October 2021, and also to be part of the careers programme by coming into school to talk to students about their careers, perhaps at a lunchtime or after school. If you are able to help and want to get involved, please contact the Careers Department at [careers@leicestergrammar.org.uk](mailto:careers@leicestergrammar.org.uk)

The School wishes to thank the OLs pictured below who were exhibitors at the 2019 Careers Fair.



**KATE LEE (NEE DAVIES) OL'98**  
Samworth Brothers, Quality Foods



**VISHALI HINDOCHA (OL '99)**  
Dentistry



**ROBIN MCFARLAND (OL '14)**  
Gameplay Programmer, Dambuster Studios



**CHARLOTTE LEEDS (OL '03)**  
Occupational Therapy



**STEVEN POZERSKIS (OL '05)**  
Iceni Projects



**FIONA COFFEE (OL '10)**  
Clifford Chance Law



**JAMES GEARY (OL '95)**  
EMW Law



**ELLIE DIXON (OL '15)**  
Freeths Solicitors



**RICHARD NEILSON (OL '01)**  
Galliford Try, Construction



**CHRIS WOOD (OL '04)**  
Williams Advanced Engineering



**RENUKA CHAUHAN (OL '14)**  
Medicine



**KOMAL PARMAR (OL '98)**  
Medicine



# REUNION

## 10, 20 & 30 Year Reunion

The Classes of '89, '99, & '09  
June 2019



**'89 LEAVERS** Tom Cossham, Faith Archer (nee Dewey), Lisa Logan (nee Carter), Alison Walker, Stephen Small, Simon Leslie, Mark Walls, David Hawker. **'99 LEAVERS** Jemma Haines (nee Rogerson), Hannah Howe (nee Painter), Helen Jeffrey (nee Tyler), Jenny Stables (nee Greaves), Helen Coles- Hennessey, Antonia Pulsford (nee Charles), Louisa Nadolny, Surina Modha (nee Hindocha), Sarah Barker, Vishali Hindocha. **'09 LEAVERS** Angharad Scott, Tom Peake, Naomi Atkinson, Ed Bennetts, Hugo Graham, Jay Shah, James Holley, Charlie Sansome, Rosie Cavill-Shah, Dru Chudasama, Reena Takhar, Tanika Stewart, Kathryn Chung, Rebecca Ojari, Sarah Blane.





Photo L-R: Rohit Francis (OL '16), Rahul Patel (OL '18), Sophia Odeh (OL '19), David Kyei-Mensah (OL '16), Layla Rizvi (OL '15), Rhondell Stabana (OL '13)



## CLASS OF '19 TEA PARTY, DECEMBER 2019

It has always been my intention to try to organise an event for recent leavers, and last year we hosted an event in the form of an afternoon tea for the class of '19. The aim of this event was to give that group an opportunity to meet and talk about their experiences after their first term in higher education. It was also an opportunity for them to collect their A-level certificates in a more orderly and convenient way than normal. It is important that the OL Association is something which they feel is relevant to them and so an early opportunity to return to School seemed a good idea.

Uncertain of how many might come, I was delighted that we were able to welcome about 70 students to the event, which was scheduled to be on the same evening as the Carol Service. We intend this to become an annual event.

Ron Berry

# Black Lives Matter

In light of recent events surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement, my fellow peers and I who attended Leicester Grammar School felt the need to get in contact with the school regarding certain aspects of our education and curriculum.

The contribution that BAME people played in this country's history - from the British Empire's past including the exploitation of its numerous colonies and mass enslavement of Africans that fuelled the Industrial Revolution, to the thousands of BAME soldiers who laid down their lives during the World Wars, as well as unquantifiable contributions to culture - cannot go unmentioned anymore.

LGS is teaching individuals who will hopefully see this country into a new era of tolerance, respect, and anti-racism. Therefore, it is imperative that the curriculum probes into the less triumphalist aspects of the country's past and presents a more balanced and accurate account of British history. The curriculum needs to change to acknowledge the fundamental origins of systemic racism. This in turn will enhance mutual understanding of immigration and each other's backgrounds. We do not study history to make anyone feel guilty, but rather to understand and acknowledge the cornerstones of our modern society. The horrors of the past not only mirror the events of the present but built their foundations, and simply being aware can positively inform the way we shape our future.

Our letter to the school (accruing nearly 600 signatures in 3 days) was received favourably by Mr. Watson who was already planning to invite a panel of former students back to school for Teacher INSET day. Healthy discussion ensued, all in a constructive manner; tangible outcomes were identified as part of progressive steps. We OLs feel it is our responsibility to ensure that LGS is and will be acting as an advocate for change. Other institutions will look up to LGS at the forefront of positive change within the community, thereby developing society for the better. We must act now.

Rohit Francis

## Contact us

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

f [www.facebook.com/LGSOLs](https://www.facebook.com/LGSOLs)

🐦 @LGSOLS

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