

# ASSOCIATES NEWS



## Celebrity squares

Associates dive into the secret history of London's Mayfair (picture, Grosvenor Gardens, London) **p10**

Join the fundraisers  
Raise money for charity and have fun into the bargain **p16**

Miners' strike memories  
A leader recalls the impact of the 1984-5 dispute on his school **p18**

*Associates News*, the magazine for associate members of the Association of School and College Leaders, is published three times a year and is also available online: [www.ascl.org.uk/associatesnews](http://www.ascl.org.uk/associatesnews)

Publisher:  
Association of School and College Leaders, 2nd Floor, Peat House,  
1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP | T: 0116 299 1122

Contact us

Editorial correspondence: [associatesnews@ascl.org.uk](mailto:associatesnews@ascl.org.uk)

Copy deadline for the next issue is: **Monday 25 April 2022**

Membership queries: [membership@ascl.org.uk](mailto:membership@ascl.org.uk)

Twitter: [@ASCL\\_UK](https://twitter.com/ASCL_UK)

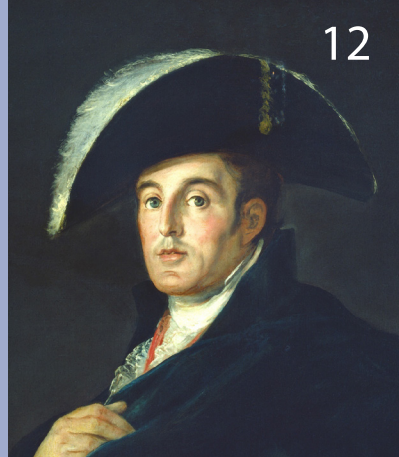
If you would like to sign up to receive the ASCL e-newsletter then please contact [membership@ascl.org.uk](mailto:membership@ascl.org.uk) stating your preferred email address, full name and membership number. You will receive the email every Tuesday during term time. To view previous issues please go to the ASCL website, News and Views, Newsletters.

Update your GDPR preferences by visiting [www.ascl.org.uk/myASCL](http://www.ascl.org.uk/myASCL) If you need login details for the website please email [website@ascl.org.uk](mailto:website@ascl.org.uk)

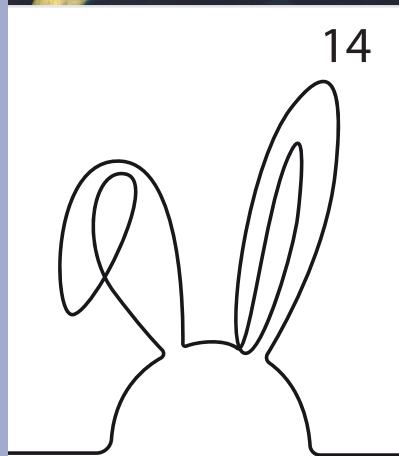
- 04 **All for one**  
Amid the turbulence of the pandemic, hearing inspiring insights from leaders has been joyfully uplifting, says ASCL General Secretary Geoff Barton
- 05 **News round-up**  
The latest from the Associates' Committee plus updates on pensions, marketing and policy, and nominations open for four committee places
- 10 **Celebrity squares**  
Pat Sales reports on a successful return for the Associates' real-life walking tours with a visit to London's Mayfair
- 12 **The reunion is back!**  
Apsley House, London is the setting for the long-postponed Associates get-together
- 14 **Frozen rabbit and Pritt Sticks**  
Tim Withers recounts the surprising anecdotes shared by colleagues at his retirement dinner
- 16 **Join the fundraisers**  
Raise money for a good cause and have fun into the bargain
- 17 **Obituaries**  
Mike Treadaway transformed the use of data as co-founder of the FFT, part of the Fischer Family Trust  
  
Sybil Thomas led the development of Chesterfield High School as its first head in 1972
- 18 **Time of my Life**  
Living in "the largest pit village in England", Peter Senior saw first-hand the impact of the 1984-5 miners' strike on the community



08



12



14

# ALL HANDS ON DECK

**During this wearying Covid phase, ASCL members have talked back to us and painted an extraordinary picture of leadership amid adversity, says Geoff Barton**



Sometimes – but, perhaps, particularly in these strange political times – it’s worth looking to the past when looking for insights into the present. I’m thinking, in particular, about what we can learn about leadership now from thoughts back then.

Publilius Syrus was a Syrian slave who went on to become one of the great writers and thinkers of the Roman Empire. “Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm,” he said, referring to leadership, and that’s surely true.

It’s amid times of greatest turbulence that we see leadership tested to its limits, when we see its true strength, when we see our own leadership capacity in its sharpest focus.

## Listening to members

For me, one of the fascinations of being at the ASCL helm over these years of a tumultuous public health crisis has been listening to the voices of our members. More than for any of my predecessors, technology has made it much easier for the ASCL team and me to talk directly to our members and for our members, in turn, to talk back to us.

We’ve used our twice-weekly emails, videos, webinars and podcasts to try to give a view to members of what we think the key issues might be from one day to the next and what they might choose to focus on in their own particular contexts.

As the pandemic has evolved, we’ve moved from talking about social distancing and sanitiser, to free school meals, to teacher-assessed grades, to lateral flow testing and vaccination. Occasionally we’ve even been able to talk about education!

## Sense of perspective

Based on our conversations with the Department for Education, its ministers and officials, we’ve tried to provide a sense of perspective, the unwritten text being: “Here’s what we think you need to know about . . . and here’s what we think you don’t”.

All of that is not so different from our role as a trade union and professional association in normal times. What has been distinctive, in this wearying Covid phase, is the way our members have talked back to us, to me, creating a graphic image of leadership amid adversity.

## Sometimes, it’s a postcard from the Covid frontline:

We currently have 12% of our year 7s at home with Covid. 35% of our students have tested positive since returning in September (333/942). We have been so short of teachers due to Covid that we’ve had to ask whole year groups to work from home as we just haven’t been able to maintain safe supervision levels. Our headteacher has been off for nine weeks so far due to being particularly unwell with Covid back in November.

## Sometimes members are expressing gratitude:

I am a very ‘quiet’ ASCL member. I have little or no social media profile and I rarely, if ever, send in responses to the weekly emails. However, I have been meaning, for months, to send in my deeply heartfelt thanks to the ASCL team. Over the last two years (and I cannot believe it is two years), one of the things that has been most important in helping us to manage all the different stages of crisis and, more recently, as we move to a phase of more hopeful

renewal, has been the support of other headteachers. I always value the wisdom, calm, sense of purpose and wit of the emails. Our education system as a whole is richer and better because of the work of the ASCL team.

## And sometimes they have shared something funny or poignant from a pupil:

I think back over the day and smile at the comments of a Year 8 boy, a young man living in care who has such a very difficult story.

“Miss,” he said to me today, “can I say something?”

“Of course,” I replied.

“You look so much different from last year, Miss – your eyes are older and your hair is different – more grey, sort of.”

Children are so perceptive aren’t they?

“Are you tired?” he goes on to ask.

My eyes fill up. “Yes,” I say. “Yes, I’m tired.”

So, yes, Publilius Syrus was right: “Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.”

Over these past long, anxiety-filled months our members have navigated through waters that are anything but calm. Their resilience and optimism have been inspiring.

And in supporting and representing them, I couldn’t be prouder to be the person at the ASCL helm.

# STAYING UP TO DATE

## ASCL continues to develop the different ways it provides members with updates and guidance through video briefings and the podcast series

Following last year’s launch of video updates from the Specialist Policy Team, ASCL has introduced a new monthly service concentrating on the work of the Member Support Team.

“These videos are generally recorded at the end of each month and touch on employment related issues and the topics that members are seeking help on from the ASCL Hotline,” says Annette Wade, Director of Marketing and Membership.

“Feedback on these sessions has been fantastic with many members finding them invaluable for briefing them and their teams on the essential aspects that they need to be aware of in the month ahead.

“We hope the sessions will provide hints and tips which may help them avoid issues in their own context.”

You can view the latest briefings by visiting [www.ascl.org.uk/teamascl](http://www.ascl.org.uk/teamascl) and logging in using your MyASCL details.

We have also continued to develop our podcast series, says Annette, who adds the Business Brunch podcast featuring Hayley Dunn, ASCL Business Leadership Specialist, Julia Harden, ASCL Funding Specialist, and Louise Hatswell, ASCL Conditions of Employment Specialist is proving to be a hit.

You can take a look at the full range of podcasts here [www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts)

## Associates update

The Associates Committee enjoyed their first 'hybrid' meeting when they met at the new ASCL HQ office in Peat House or joined virtually via Microsoft Teams in January 2022, writes *Christine Shellard*.

There was an optimistic feeling of spring in the air as chair Ann Mullins welcomed members in the new surroundings (the new office in Leicester is next to the railway station and an NCP car park, handily) with those present in person viewing those at home via a large screen.

Since October a group has been hard at work updating the committee terms of reference and the revised document is intended to be a starting point and cover a period of transition until 2024.

The areas covered include overall responsibility; composition and reporting; election and terms of office; and main duties. The model will be reviewed annually.

The reunion visit to the Duke of Wellington's home, Apsley House in May (see page 12) was also

discussed and it was agreed that the next reunion will take place outside the Home Counties.

The ongoing need for contributions for Associate News, published three times a year, was highlighted.

Members saw an outline of the programme for the ASCL Annual Conference in March and confirmed that two committee members will be attending who will report back to the next meeting.

The finale to a very positive meeting was provided by Jacques Szemalikowski, ASCL's Conditions of Employment Specialist, who urged serving members to check their pensions statements.

He also emphasised that management of the lump sum presents the greatest current challenge.

Younger members in the profession particularly are urged to seek support through ASCL's Leader magazine, guidance papers and pensions seminars.

## Associates can benefit from pensions 'remedy'

The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill is making its way through various parliamentary stages, writes *Jacques Szemalikowski, ASCL Conditions of Employment Specialist*.

It puts in place a framework to address the discrimination identified in the so-called McCloud judgement that I wrote about in the summer 2021 edition of Associates News.

Applying to all public sector schemes, the Bill may have implications for your teachers' pension as a beneficiary if you were in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) on 31 March 2012, and still in it on 1 April 2015.

The Bill contains amendments to close legacy TPS (the two final salary sections) to further accrual on 31 March 2022 and move all active members into the reformed scheme on 1 April 2022. For active members, years accrued to March 2022 will still be linked to their real final salary.

At the point of taking benefits eligible members will be able to choose under which set of benefits (legacy scheme or reformed scheme) they wish their pensionable service during the remedy period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022 to be based.

This also applies to Associates. This is because the remedy will apply to all colleagues who were in the TPS 31 March

2012 and still in it on 1 April 2015, whether they are currently still in the scheme or not, or indeed have retired.

### One-time binary choice

The plan is that retired members in scope will also be offered the same one-time binary choice. Do you wish your benefits built up between 1 April 2015 and your retirement date to be calculated, as now, in the legacy scheme; or would you prefer them based on the reformed scheme?

Anyone choosing the latter will be eligible for any overpayment or underpayment of pension benefits or member contributions already paid alongside any reimbursement of overpaid tax. At the moment there is nothing to be done. However, at the point of being contacted once the Bill becomes law, Associates would be wise to seek independent financial advice before making any decisions.

For associates in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) life is simpler with an inbuilt extension of the statutory underpin ensuring the best pension benefit is in payment.

There is more information and guidance on pensions at [www.ascl.org.uk/Pensions](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Pensions)

For information on preparing for retirement, see the ASCL Associates at [www.ascl.org.uk/Associates](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Associates)

## Policy highlights: continuing impact of Covid and schools' White Paper

### Covid measures

We liaise with the government almost daily around the measures needed in schools and colleges as the pandemic evolves, writes *ASCL Director of Policy Julie McCulloch*. At the beginning of January, we and other unions called for the government to take immediate steps to mitigate the risk of Covid transmission and minimise disruption. The government has gone some way towards meeting our requests and we'll continue to press for more support.

### Vulnerable children

ASCL is involved in several groups and initiatives that are attempting to gain a better understanding of the severe impact of the pandemic on our most vulnerable children. These include the DfE's Vulnerable Children and Young People Board, which our SEND and Inclusion Specialist Margaret Mulholland sits on. General Secretary Geoff Barton is also a member of the government's new Attendance Alliance

– a group of experts across health, education and social care, assembled to explore barriers to school attendance.

### Funding

In December, we submitted a paper to the team working on the schools' White Paper, setting out a series of recommendations for a reformed approach to high-needs funding that reflects the needs of children and young people with SEND. Instead of the current model – waiting for something to 'go wrong', then trying to fix it – we proposed an approach to give local authorities, schools and colleges the funding they need to deliver outstanding education and support for children and young people with SEND.

### Inspection

At the time of writing, Ofsted has moved to a position – similar to an approach we had proposed – whereby schools

and colleges which are significantly affected by Covid-related staff absence are encouraged to ask for their inspection to be deferred. We are discussing with Ofsted the extent to which deferral requests are being automatically granted.

### Qualifications and exams

We continue to be closely involved in what the new stage of the pandemic means for exams this year, including discussions of what circumstances might lead to the cancellation of exams and a move to the teacher assessment-based contingency arrangements.

As active supporters of the #ProtectStudentChoice campaign, we are pleased the government has decided to delay the removal of funding for most BTECs and other applied general qualifications.

### The school system

We are contributing to the government's thinking on the school system – and particularly its desire for all schools to be part of strong trusts – in several ways. The ASCL Trust Leadership Advisory Group recently met with Baroness Barran, Minister for the School System, for discussions and we submitted a paper to the team working on the schools' White Paper, suggesting ways in which the government could implement system reform in a way that brings stakeholders with it, reduces disruption and, most importantly, leads to a system in which all schools are supported and challenged to provide an excellent education to every child.

## Podcast highlights: Leadership, disadvantaged children, SEND and business updates

ASCL's podcasting goes from strength to strength and the library of recordings now includes interviews and insights on business, SEND, input from ASCL's team of specialist advisors as well as leadership issues.

In his latest Leadership podcast, ASCL General Secretary Geoff Barton talks to Rebecca Boomer-Clark, CEO of Academies Enterprise Trust, about her career, the work of AET across communities, and the future of the trust system.

'Becks', as she is known by all, describes her route to senior leadership from training as a PE teacher through setting up a school sports partnership and becoming national education director for Oasis before being recruited to the DfE as regional schools commissioner in the South-West and joining AET.

Collaborations have been key throughout her career, she tells Geoff.

"I've always been more inclined to lead than to follow and I knew from early on that I wanted to have as much impact on as many children as possible and be challenged. The school sports partnership role spoke to my sense of teamwork and collaboration and it was about a completely different way of working – building partnerships from scratch, recognising the impact of wider school life on young people, and from that point onwards, I didn't really look back. It taught me that we could achieve so much more through powerful networks of schools coming together in pursuit of a common goal."

Geoff also talks to Natalie Perera, Chief Executive of the Education Policy Institute (EPI) about the work of EPI, an independent research organisation focused on education and young people's mental health.

It analyses large data sets, such as the National Pupil Database and the Millennium cohort study, to understand what they reveal about education. EPI's latest report

examines the widening gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children using 2020 data.

"2020 is obviously an outlier year as there were no formal exams due to the pandemic but we looked at teacher-assess grades nonetheless," Natalie says. "What we find is that for pupils who had GCSE grades in 2020 there's no progress in closing the disadvantage gap and progress has stalled for disadvantaged pupils. For those in long-term poverty, there hasn't been any progress in closing the gap for around a decade which is incredibly worrying."

The report recommends a cross-government child poverty strategy looking across the board at welfare, education, housing and health to improve the life chances of young people and at how universities and employers can view the grades received by young people during the pandemic years and contextualise them so that disadvantaged young people are treated fairly.

Other recent podcasts include Geoff in conversation with ASCL Northern Ireland President Stephen Moore and a conversation between Geoff, David Gregson and Meera Saravanan about the Greater Manchester #BeeWell project, which is surveying the wellbeing of young people in secondary schools across Greater Manchester.

Elsewhere, in the SEND Bites collection, ASCL SEN and inclusion specialist Margaret Mulholland talks to Katherine Walsh, Regional SEND Leader for South Central England and Northwest London, while, in Business Bruch, there are updates from ASCL's policy specialists and former school business leaders, Hayley Dunn, Louise Hatswell and Julia Harnden.

To hear all of ASCL's podcasts, go to [www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts)

## Write for Associates News!

### **Associates News is looking for more contributors.**

If you have an experience about retirement life to share, if you're active in an organisation or advisory body, if you're fundraising for a good cause or if you are making a splash in a new career field, we'd like to hear about it.

We're also keen to receive contributions for our Time of My Life slot (see page 19), highlighting memorable career or life moments for members.

*Associates News* is published three times a year in March, July and November but contributions are welcome at any time.

Send your contributions, with images if available, to [associatesnews@ascl.org.uk](mailto:associatesnews@ascl.org.uk)

(We reserve the right to edit copy for length.)

## Cast your vote for Associates Committee

Four seats on the Associates Committee are coming up for election as members come to the end of their three-year terms.

Paul Baker, Jill Belcher, Pat Sales and Christine Shellard, have served on the committee since 2019.

Serving committee members are eligible for re-election. ASCL will deal with elections by a single transferable vote.

The 12-strong committee represents ASCL associate members and meets three times a year.

Nominations (note that you can nominate yourself) should be accompanied by a brief statement, maximum 90 words, typed if possible.

To make a nomination, use the form here or go online at [www.ascl.org.uk/associates-committee](http://www.ascl.org.uk/associates-committee)

### **Nomination form: Associate Committee - term 1 September 2022 - 31 August 2025**

Name of nominee: \_\_\_\_\_ Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Former school/college: \_\_\_\_\_

Any national or branch offices, responsibilities held: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed nomination forms by **Thursday 14 April 2022** for the attention of Corporate Administration, ASCL 2nd Floor, Peat House, 1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP or email to [corporateadmin@ascl.org.uk](mailto:corporateadmin@ascl.org.uk)

# CELEBRITY SQUARES

**After a series of virtual pandemic perambulations, ASCL's walking tours returned to the streets in autumn 2021 with a wander around the Mayfair area of London, as Pat Sales reports**

We gathered in Marylebone Lane outside Bond Street station north entrance. The sun was shining and our guide was Alan MacDougall who led us around a most exclusive and fashionable area where the freehold of the land is still owned almost entirely by the Grosvenor family.

Following a sudden exodus by many of our morning group to use the facilities in Selfridges (!), we set off southwards across Oxford Street towards Grosvenor Square.

There we looked at the architecture of three original buildings: the former home of the second President of the United States, John Adams; the Italian Embassy and the house on the northern side of the square where the draft Treaty of American Independence was drawn.

Crossing the square, we saw the monument to the 'Eagle Squadrons', the statue of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the memorial to the victims of 9/11.

We walked southwards to the Grosvenor Chapel which is built in the New England style. While admiring its façade, Alan told us the story of the 'Dead Letter Box Drop'.

In Mayfair and other areas of London, small boxes were built into the design of lampposts where, during the Cold War, British Agents working for the Russians would leave messages and informative documents for Soviet Agents to collect and pass on to their leaders. These boxes can still be seen but are now sealed shut.

## Unusual tree

This espionage story continued. We left South Audley Street and went eastwards towards the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception, Mayfair.

An unusual tree is circled by public park benches where the British agent would leave a chalk mark when a message had been left.

The church's external gothic architecture by Pugin is superb. The main high altar is located to the north side with lovely large stained glass windows.

Inside, we were treated to a variety of paintings and a unique sculpture deemed to

be that of Jesus Christ asleep on a park bench, created to honour all those who sleep rough on London streets.

We walked down Chesterfield Street and stopped opposite the house of the 18th-century dandy Beau Brummell, later the residence of Anthony Eden.

Here, the Prince Regent and members of the aristocracy gathered each morning to witness Brummell at his toilette, spending hours observing him dress. He held an interesting relationship with royalty before his tragic demise and he ended his days living alone in Paris.

From here we walked eastwards towards Shepherd's Market, the original location of the May Fair (Fayre) from which the area derived its name.

Shepherd Market is a small area where streets and alleyways converge. It was not only used as a marketplace in the conventional sense but was also a renowned area for the 'women of the night', as they were referred to.

Its more recent claim to fame is that it was the venue featured in a famous court case when the words of the judge spoken following the verdict included: "... the fragrant Mrs Archer ...".

We walked on to Berkeley Square, created in 1789 and in which grow large plane trees thought to be the oldest in London. On the west of the Square there are still some of the original four and five-storey houses.

Number 46 was designed by William Kent and housed the Clermont Club which was made famous by John Aspinall and his friends James Goldsmith and John Bingham (aka Lord Lucan).

Today the lower floors are the location of Annabel's club and the design features of the current front entrance need to be seen to be believed.

On to our final stop in Davies Street named after the heiress Mary Davies who was betrothed in marriage before she became a teenager. It was her marriage to Sir Thomas Grosvenor in 1677 which brought the 500 acres of land into the Grosvenor family and their estate.

The Associates' Committee hopes that more members and guests will join us for our 2022 social gatherings and events. Please check your ASCL emails and Associates News.

The postponed May 2020 Reunion Day in London learning about the Life of the Duke of Wellington is planned for May 2022 – see page 12.

A guided walk in London is planned for mid-September 2022.



# IT'S BACK! JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL REUNION

The home of the Duke of Wellington in London is the splendid venue for this year's long-postponed Associates get-together

The annual reunion for ASCL Associate members takes place on Wednesday May 18 at Number 1 London, the popular name for Apsley House, located in the heart of the capital at Hyde Park Corner.



### About the venue

The interior has changed little since it became home to the Duke of Wellington after his victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. The family are still in residence and Apsley House remains one of the last great aristocratic townhouses in London.

The house contains one of the finest art collections in London, including paintings by Velazquez, Goya and Breughel. Canova's statue of Napoleon dominates the stairwell at the centre of the house and there's a world-class collection of porcelain on display, gifts to the Duke from the grateful monarchs of Europe.

Just opposite, Wellington's statue faces his house. The adjacent Wellington Arch was formerly a grand approach to Buckingham Palace, but it was moved here and became a victory arch proclaiming Wellington's triumph.

Also in this area are a number of war memorials. The statues representing Bomber Command are impressive and face the RAF Club in Piccadilly. There are also the Royal Artillery Memorial, the Australian and New Zealand war memorials and the Memorial Gates at the entrance to Constitution Hill.

### The life of Wellington

Born in Dublin in 1769 to the Earl and Countess of Mornington, he failed to shine at Eton and was sent off to a military school in – of all places – France. He did not desire a career in the army but, following his mother's wishes, he joined a Highland regiment fighting in Flanders and India.

In 1806 he was elected MP for Rye and within a year became Chief Secretary of Ireland. He simultaneously continued his military career, fighting in Portugal and France, and was made commander of the British Army in the Peninsular war.

On his return to England after Waterloo, he joined Lord Liverpool's government and, after being overlooked twice, was finally invited to form his own administration in 1828. He died in 1852 and was buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

### Travel

Tube stations: Hyde Park Corner on the Piccadilly Line or Apsley House is a 10-minute walk from Green Park on the Jubilee, Victoria and Piccadilly lines.

### Where to stay

There are several Premier Inns near to Apsley House. Or you could splash out on the Ritz or one of the swanky hotels on Park Lane!

It is suggested that we meet in the Wellington Arch at 11.30am, see the view from the roof and have a look at the exhibition, before crossing the road to Apsley House for our guided tour at noon.

Afterwards we will walk a short distance to the Rose and Crown pub for lunch. It used to be the living quarters for Oliver Cromwell's bodyguards, and was called after him until

the name was changed in 1678. Members may wish to round off the afternoon with a visit to nearby Shepherd Market

### Booking and costs

Apsley House: Entrance and guided tour: £6 for English Heritage or Art Fund members, £16 other concessions.

Wellington Arch: free for English Heritage members, £5.10 concessions

Lunch at the Rose and Crown, two courses plus coffee, £27

To reserve places, please return your completed booking form to Varsha Chawda at ASCL, 2nd Floor, Peat House, 1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP by **20 April 2022**. Varsha is dealing with the reunion administration and her other contact details are: [Varsha.Chawda@ascl.org.uk](mailto:Varsha.Chawda@ascl.org.uk), 0116 299 1122

### Booking form: Apsley House - Wednesday 18 May 2022

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I shall be accompanied by: \_\_\_\_\_

Special dietary/disability requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Apsley House entrance and guided tour: (please indicate number of people attending)

Wellington Arch: (please indicate number of people attending)

Lunch: (please indicate number of people attending)

I enclose a cheque (payable to ASCL) for the total amount of £

For associates wishing to pay by BACS: Natwest, 7 Hinkley Road, Leicester LE3 0TQ

Sort code: 60-60-06 Account number: 46216383 for reference please quote 'Associates - (your name)'

Tick here if you are paying by BACS

Please return your completed booking form to Varsha Chawda at ASCL, 2nd Floor, Peat House, 1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP by **20 April 2022**.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ON THE MENU – FROZEN RABBIT AND PRITT STICKS

**Last year, Tim Withers retired as CEO of the Palladian Academy Trust (PAT), made up of 10 schools in Wiltshire and Bath, and marked the event with a special retirement dinner which he recounts here.**

The former colleagues I invited, for the most part, had little previous knowledge of each other but I wanted to have a general conversation drawing upon our collective experience of more than 200 years working in and with schools.

We arrived at the Hotel du Vin, Bristol after being delayed by anti-vax protests. When was a school leader ever expecting to be able to go with Plan A?

We began by sharing our humorous moments over the starter.

Andrea Arlidge, CEO of Futura Learning Partnership, recalled the 1980s CSE English talk by Bruce, whose assessment revolved around skinning rabbits.

The rabbit wasn't pulled from his hat so much as from a Hagrid-like overcoat. Unfortunately, having spent the night in the freezer, it was solid and unthawed. Even with the experience of practised dexterity, Bruce was unable to complete the job.

I didn't ask, in fact, about the presence in school of a large knife! Different times . . . one of the themes of the evening.

The group went on to reflect on the enormous worth for students of such presentations, long since excised from the curriculum but valuable for language and personal development alike.

Linda Faulkner, retired head of English at Brimsham Green School, Yate highlighted how important the talks proved in forming strong relationships with students.

"We used to smile all the time," she added, which was heartening, and not always a view heard in 2022.

Gabrielle Murtagh, former assistant headteacher at Portway School, Bristol commented that she missed the camaraderie of the staffroom of which humour is such a key part.

## A Damascene moment

Over the main course, we discussed career highlights.

Jo Marsh was our chief operating officer at the trust and had moved from the police into education. A Damascene moment was arriving for interview in Ralph Allen School and noticing the culture and the way that children were with each other; she knew it was where she belonged.

Andrea valued the frankness and directness of children, noting from recent experience of consultation on the proposed merger of an infant and junior school, "they were straight in there: Who's going to be the head?" – the killer question.

With Linda, older Brimsham Green Older students had the experience of a Stratford residential visit and it was noted that enriching activities such as this played a key part in life opportunities and university application.

For Linda as a head of English, getting children to read Shakespeare was powerfully affecting. "Sometimes the most unexpected people could read Shakespeare, and I was in the corner thinking I might have a little cry. Those moments . . . you didn't need many of them to keep you going."

It struck a chord with Gabrielle who loved getting children to read the French broadsheet newspapers with confidence. One poignant note was around the very positive experience of visiting schools in other countries. With Brexit uncertainty, we agreed how

critical it was not to lose the chances of gaining wider perspective and learning from other jurisdictions.

Andrea remembered singing *Hey Big Spender* à la Shirley Bassey in the Sixth Form Revue. I am sure those present recall it too.

Over dessert, the conversation turned to changes seen in schools during our careers, especially the advance of technology and how this has turbo-charged learning. Chris Healy, retired head of Balcarras School, Cheltenham, reflected on an era of rapid development: "It really does enliven lessons."

Gabrielle noted that though technology has developed significantly, we remain with the 19th-century factory model in many ways with students arriving and leaving at the same time and staying within the rigidity of the timetable.

Linda especially valued the time and space for creative activities such as free writing, stimulating imagination and the use of the Fiction Room in Brimsham Green School, with very high numbers of students taking out books to read.

It was a general view that time and space for the development of creativity was heavily pressured by today's more regimented and accountable approach.

At the same time, today's use of data is far better, as Gabrielle observed. The science and experience of working with support staff has also developed both within and outside the classroom, with roles being more appreciated and understood. "The quality of support staff is far better – so talented and they make a great contribution," said Chris.

Very definitely, standards and expectations have risen with the sober realisation that this has sometimes led to higher levels of student and staff anxiety, but with far more ability to manage sharp interventions.

"We are clearer about what a good school looks like, and we pay so much more attention to the craft of teaching," Gabrielle concluded, though Linda lamented that many colleagues with enormous experience are lost to the profession when they could and should continue to offer, say, coaching and mentoring support.

Over coffee and mint tea, we reflected on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Linda posited that growing up had always been anxious, "It's just been magnified."

## 'More beleaguered'

Clearly, alongside the pressures of meeting targets, social media drives further anxiety, affecting sleep patterns, and allowing little escape. It was commented that students are 'more beleaguered than they used to be', and also that the need for counselling has grown exponentially.

Linda wondered what the best role for parents to play in this context had become. Girls in particular

are facing sexual pressures that have only recently been recognised and can feel 'bombarded'.

We also debated to what extent Generation Z were resilient, finding some contradiction between clear strains on mental health and wellbeing and the optimism and idealism of the students themselves.

Many other avenues were explored in the four hours that we spent together.

On the craft of teaching, Linda talked about the importance of one's own behaviour – "Isn't that the major thing about being a teacher? You've got to model being an adult. It's critical to model the behaviour that you want from students. You can't just tell them to do it."

As someone who had worked mostly in secondary schools Andrea said it had subsequently also been "an absolute joy to work with primary schools" and Jo agreed that the 'through-ness' of education now offered new possibilities.

Jo reflected on how much discussion there appeared to be on fundamentals – "You don't want to fill out a nine-page form to get a Pritt stick. It's scarring," while, with big organisations, and sometimes local authorities, "The rules are often written to the lowest common denominator of mistrust."

## Spirit of the times

There was also the sense that students continue to drive social changes and challenge thinking, being more tuned in to the spirit of the times. Veganism, trans issues, attitudes to uniform . . . it is likely that adults may need reflective time and training to keep pace and make the right decisions. Much older than Generation Z, we share and admire their ideals and optimism; we learn from them.

Filtering out to the bottom of Christmas Steps in Bristol and into taxis, we knew we had shared a moment of communion. As I had hoped, it was not just about my retirement as CEO, but an affirmation of all our careers, some of which are still in train.

We also knew the value of our 200 years-plus of the most important job in the world: working with children and young people in schools.

I wonder which half dozen people you would invite to your retirement dinner, and why? And, when you get the chance, do thank them for their inspiring examples.

Tim Withers was CEO of the Palladian Academy Trust 2016-2021



# STEPPING OUT FOR CHARITY

After more than a year of largely virtual events, charity fundraising is coming back to real life this year. Here are some ways to run, walk, swim or eat cakes to help a good cause and have fun into the bargain



## Alzheimer's Society – Memory Walks – March 2022

The Glow Memory Walks campaign (pictured above right) throughout March brings people together in many of the UK's cities to walk in memory of a loved one with dementia.

Routes are around 5km and walkers aim for a fundraising target of £160 (£10 registration fee). Each walk has a theme and the charity provides online resources to help you, including hints and tricks for fundraising online and a printable label to pin to your T-shirt to let others know who you are remembering as you walk.

Go to [www.alzheimers.org.uk/memory-walk/glow/find-a-walk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/memory-walk/glow/find-a-walk)



## Marie Curie Swimathon May 6-8 2022

A national swimming event taking place in pools around the country and open to everyone, irrespective of age and ability (left).

Participants can choose to swim different lengths starting with 400m as an individual or as part of a team.

Fundraising is through sponsorship and there's no minimum target set. There is a registration fee of £14 for individuals (+ £2.50 support swimming fee) or £28 (+ £2.50 support swimming fee) for teams.

Go to [www.mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/charity-events/swimming/swimathon](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/charity-events/swimming/swimathon)

## Thames Wellness Walk for Diabetes UK – May 8 2022

Walk the historic green Thames Path to help raise money for Diabetes UK.

Starting and ending at Syon Park, west London, the ten-mile walk heads towards Twickenham past nature reserves and wetlands, through royal parks and along the

Thames, taking in palaces and other historic buildings.

There are five different start times between 9.30am and 11.30am. It's free to register with no minimum fundraising target.

Go to [www.diabetes.org.uk/get\\_involved/fundraising-events/thames-path-walk/thames-path-walk-help-faq](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/get_involved/fundraising-events/thames-path-walk/thames-path-walk-help-faq)

## Tea parties

Lots of charities encourage you to host your own event, such as a tea party with friends, with many providing ideas of how to organise and promote including what to bake and setting up a fundraising page.

Guide Dogs' fundraising pack includes tips on organising plus a poster and puppy bunting to promote your tea party, cake toppers and flags for your cakes and a money box for donations.

Go to [www.guidedogs.org.uk/national-tea-day/](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/national-tea-day/)

The Red Cross is continuing its tea-party based fundraising campaign, launched in September 2021, to 'Pour a cup of kindness' and inviting people around the country come together for a cuppa at home, in the garden or virtually.

Go to [www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising-and-events/red-cross-tea-party](http://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising-and-events/red-cross-tea-party)

## Do your own thing

If you'd rather organise your own fundraiser for a specific charity or cause, organisations have lots of ideas for events, activities and challenges, many of which can be done in person or online, individually or with family and friends.

The British Heart Foundation has an A-Z list of suggestions for fundraising at home, ranging from sponsored stair-climbing to cover the same distance as an ascent up the Eiffel Tower to online games nights, home treasure hunts and mass singalongs.

Go to [www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise/do-your-own-thing/fundraising-ideas/a-z-of-fundraising-ideas](http://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise/do-your-own-thing/fundraising-ideas/a-z-of-fundraising-ideas)

## Obituary: Sybil Thomas

Sybil Thomas, who died in December 2021 aged 93, made local history as the first head of Chesterfield High School, Crosby.

Sybil grew up in Selby, Yorkshire and studied French at Queen Mary College, London and teaching at the Institute of Education, gaining a distinction. She met her husband Keith during her training and the couple married in 1957.

She taught at grammar schools in Yorkshire, moving to Crosby to join Merchant Taylors' School for Girls in 1957 as head of languages.

In 1967 she was appointed head of Waterloo Park Girls' Grammar School and then became head of the new Chesterfield High School in 1972, formed from the merger of Waterloo and Crosby County Secondary for Boys. She remained as its leader until her retirement in 1988 but stayed in contact with the school and continued to attend events there.

In a statement to local media, the school's current head, Kevin Sexton, and the chair of governors Jan Vicary, described Sybil as an "exemplary school leader who gave her life to the futures of young people in our community".

They added: "Even in retirement, she remained involved in the life of the school by regularly attending school events when she could and she emailed us quite recently as she watched how we have progressed by reading our website avidly.

"We send her family and friends our condolences and we will always remember Sybil's contributions to education and the lives of Chesterfield High School families."

More than 200 friends, colleagues and ex-pupils attended the funeral service for Sybil at Sefton Parish Church, the choir being joined by choristers from 'her' school.

## Obituary: Mike Treadaway

Dr Mike Treadaway, who died in December 2021, transformed the way local authorities, schools and their leaders and teachers thought about and used data in his role as co-founder of the FFT, part of the Fischer Family Trust.

Mike was a great friend to ASCL, and many colleagues will remember his incredible enthusiasm when he was presenting ideas. But this enthusiasm was not about the data or the graphs; Mike was passionate that data should be used correctly which for him meant three distinct things.

Where simplistic approaches seemed to suggest one set of conclusions, he was careful to show that better use of the data helped us ask better questions and perhaps reach different conclusions. This was most evident in his belief that contextual value-added measures needed to be used alongside others, so that schools with different intakes could be compared more meaningfully.

He was not afraid to speak truth to power. When he believed policy was nonsense or damaging to schools he would say so.

Above all, his passion was that data should be used to help students, and in particular, for disadvantaged learners and that they should get a fair deal. For example, he showed very clearly that 'Ever 6' should really be simply 'Ever' by looking at the long-term impact on performance of those pupils whose families had ever met government triggers for poverty, even at the beginning of primary school.

Mike had a knack of finding ways to make complex ideas more accessible, often with a humorous edge. During one of the many Progress 8 briefings Mike and I ran in 2014, we walked past a pool table on the way to the room we were using. As quick as a flash, Mike said to me "Ah, we just need to tell them Progress 8 is all about getting the right balls in the right pockets!"

Mike called me some weeks ago to explain that he thought that he may not have too much time left and wanted a conversation with those people he had worked with along the way. I am so grateful for this as it let me pass on the thanks of the thousands of school leaders and teachers he had helped over the years. It also meant I could thank him for everything he taught me.

He combined a towering intellect for his subject, great passion for telling the story and innate modesty, humanity and good grace.

When we suggested that he should be nominated for an honour, we were pushed back, not because he didn't deserve it, but because he had already, quietly, received one.

**Duncan Baldwin is a former ASCL Deputy Director of Policy**

# TIME OF MY LIFE

## Peter Senior recalls his years as deputy head at Hirst High School, in what was then known as “the largest pit village in England”, during the 1984-5 miners’ strike.

Life in the North East during the latter days of deep coal mining made a lasting impression. I drove to school each morning over mining subsidence and past the ever-ready Mines Rescue Service station.

Ashington could be identified from a distance by the large pall of thick coal smoke that shrouded the town. Roads were quiet at 0730, traffic flow related to shifts at the pit.

The strong local community was close, tough and generous. Cultural activities included plays, musical performances, art, and of course the club.

My wife would take twin toddlers and a baby shopping by the bus, but she never once had to get on board without help.

Football was the main sporting interest. The Charltons’ mother lived round the corner from school. Our venerable senior master reckoned he had taught the boys to play football!

At nearby Newbiggin the fishermen went to sea in traditional cobs. It seemed that the wind always blew, usually from the North Sea and often from Siberia. I had no coat that would keep the wind out until a colleague suggested I obtain a waxed jacket made in Sunderland.

Once, the wind took my car door from my grasp and opened it way beyond what the hinges would permit so it dropped about 30 degrees. My friendly local garage took pity on this young teacher and bent it all back for free.

### Linguistic challenge

Linguistically, the spoken word was a challenge to someone who was brought up in leafy Surrey. My English class once explained to me that I could be easily understood because I spoke like the man who read the news.

They made great efforts to ensure my vocabulary was continually broadened with local words and expressions. After all, this was a dialect, not just an accent and it was my job to learn it.

The actions of the Westminster government can look different when viewed from the “far north”. In the early 1980s there was never doubt which party would win the parliamentary seat. At the 1983 election we organised a husting at which local



candidates addressed the sixth form. The Tory candidate decided to come when he heard the others were attending. He got a polite hearing but, as ever, the students asked some incisive questions.

### Intensely loyal

Then came the miners’ strike. The local miners were not all in favour of strike action, but they were intensely loyal to the union. They believed they were fighting for the survival of their jobs and the future prosperity of their communities. The experience of the area since all the mines closed suggests that their analysis was not very wide of the mark!

We determined from the start of this national conflict that the school would be a neutral haven from events outside the gates. In this we were largely successful and most of our parents were very grateful.

But as time went on, the crisis intruded on our efforts. Pressure on families was dreadful. The local supermarket stocked only cheap food. What do you do after months without money coming into the household? At one point 70 per cent of our children were on free school meals. The county councillor used to call me to check that all the children were getting their dinner.

What do you say to a child whose uncle has just been crushed burrowing into a heap of waste coal

to find fuel to heat his house? One talented sixth form musician told me tearfully that her Dad said her cello had to be sold to feed the family. The staff had a whipround, bought it and gave it back to her.

Once the caretaker reported that sections of the school’s wooden fence were disappearing overnight. Then we remembered the youngsters we had seen selling bundles of neatly chopped firewood in the community. One guess where it was coming from!

Nationally, things got increasingly ugly as the months went by and this was reflected locally. In a community where people still heaped scorn on those who had gone back to work in 1926, it can be imagined how those who made that decision in 1984 were regarded.

Sometimes my wife would drive me to work with the family so she could have use of the car. When she came to pick me up it was time to change shift at the mine. Miners would be blocking the road to obstruct the “battle buses” needed to get the returning miners through the pit gates.

Squads of police from all over the country would be the escort, dressed in full riot gear. One of the stewards would look in the car and seeing her with the children would call out “Mother with bairns!” and the throng would part like the Red Sea as the men waved and smiled.

Then one day the miners were told it was over, so they marched proudly back to work, banners flying.

### 40 years on

How does it all seem now, after almost 40 years? I often think about it. Now people want to see it in the context of saving the planet from fossil fuels, but I don’t recollect that argument being made at the time.

Trying to apportion degrees of political or moral right and wrong is not helpful; it is the human cost that haunts me. What happened to the clever, tall sixth-former who only wanted to train as a mining engineer, like his dad?

I could see the winding gear at the Woodhorn from my office window. That colliery is a museum now and offers a very worthwhile visit.

Once I found myself on a discussion table as head of Steyning at a Department for Education conference

**‘What do you say to a child whose uncle has just been crushed burrowing into a heap of waste coal to find fuel to heat his house?’**

about the under-achievement of white males. There were three others on that table. Two were from a school in a northern town. After the introductions, they proceeded to tell me in a very forthright manner that I would have no contribution to make because coming from Sussex I knew nothing about the issues they were facing.

I was saved by the other colleague, who defended me vigorously. He had lived down the road from my school in 1984 and been a parent with a child at Hirst. He explained how we had gained many plaudits for keeping education and child support going through the strike. They were unable to respond.

More recently, we were visiting friends in Northumberland. Enjoying a drink by the sea in Newbiggin, we listened to the Colliery Band, playing tunes we knew so well. It made me cry.

Peter Senior joined ASCL forerunner the Secondary Heads Association (SHA) in 1983. He was headteacher of Chantry High, Ipswich, from 1986 to 1995 and then headteacher of Steyning Grammar School (1995-2006) in West Sussex. He became a local authority advisor, returning briefly to Steyning to lead the school through an interregnum in 2010. Peter set up his own consultancy before retiring from education in 2017.



Premier partner



# Have you made the most of your tax allowances this year?

*Lighthouse Financial Advice can help.*

*The tax year ends on 5th April. However, there is still time to make the most of your tax reliefs and allowances.*

So please contact Lighthouse Financial Advice, and we can provide jargon-free financial advice specific to you, so you can benefit from the allowances in this tax year and start to make a financial plan for the next tax year.

- ▶ Savings and investment planning
- ▶ Retirement planning
- ▶ Protecting your loved ones
- ▶ Protecting your property

To learn more about how we can help please contact us using the details below to book your **FREE** initial financial consultation. Please quote **ASCLad2203** in your email or when speaking to the team on the phone.

**T:** 08000 858590

**E:** [lhgenquiries@quilter.com](mailto:lhgenquiries@quilter.com)

[www.lighthousefinancialsolutions.co.uk](http://www.lighthousefinancialsolutions.co.uk)

*Tax treatment varies according to individual circumstances and is subject to change.*