

ISSUE 56 | SUMMER 2020

# ASSOCIATES NEWS



**ASCL**  
Association  
of School and  
College Leaders

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Planning for sunnier times ahead

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**Publisher:**  
Association of School and College Leaders, 130 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7PG  
T: 0116 299 1122

Contact us

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

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

Twitter: @ASCL\_UK

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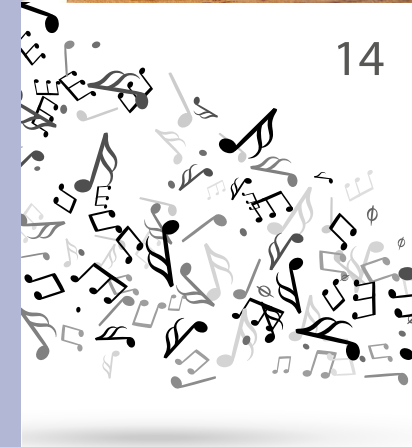
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# TURBULENT TIMES

The coronavirus crisis has been a huge challenge but the ASCL team has risen to it wonderfully well and some of the changes it has forced may even prove to be beneficial in the long term, says Geoff Barton



It's not often I would begin an article with a quotation from a Russian dictator, but these are not normal times:

**"There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen."**

So said Vladimir Lenin.

It was at our annual conference in mid-March – in an era we might call 2020 BC (Before Coronavirus) – that the real sense of what was happening started to become clear. It was the beginning of hearing new terminology – 'self-isolation' and 'social distancing'. There were bottles of hand-sanitizer all around the conference centre. We introduced guest speakers, knowing that as they entered and left the stage no one would shake anyone's hands.

In the weeks and months that have followed, of course, we've seen the full-blown nature of this most vicious of viruses. And we've seen the level of anxiety that it has induced across so many people.

But we've also seen the extraordinary response by the entire ASCL team, helping to support our members across the UK's schools and colleges. I was at the meetings at which the Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson, decided he had no alternative firstly to cancel the summer examination season and then to close down formal education for all but a small number of priority pupils.

Schools were suddenly charged with providing some kind of childcare for the children of key workers and vulnerable

children (for example, those with social workers), and they were asked to provide resources to help parents at home to keep their children engaged in some semblance of learning.

And – far better than has generally been acknowledged – that is what they have done, some deploying equipment for disadvantaged children and creating an online curriculum.

The team at ASCL quickly saw that with so many people working from home, a sense of professional isolation could set in. So we stepped up our communication. Instead of our weekly email newsletter to members, we made it daily. And we added a video version of the message, recorded by me at home, using my phone. We set up a dedicated email address so that members could send us their queries and either one of our team would provide an answer or we would ask the Department for Education for a response.

All of this has resulted in our largest membership growth with our numbers now standing at more than 19,500. It's also helped ASCL to do much faster some of the things we had talked about putting in place, from online webinars to ASCL Council being held digitally.

Of course, we all crave getting back to normal, but one of the strongest feelings I have is that some things will have changed for good and for the better. Our association's sense of being inextricably linked to our members' lives, as they navigate their way through these strange times, is just one of them.

Congratulations, Team ASCL.

# NEWS ROUND-UP

How ASCL HQ is supporting members during the coronavirus pandemic, updates from Associates' committees, and podcast highlights



## Policy team responds to crisis

In the coronavirus crisis, ASCL's policy team has been in daily contact with ministers and civil servants to alert them to members' questions and concerns and to highlight issues on which leaders need more information to deal with the biggest challenge most of them will face in their careers.

Director of Policy Julie McCulloch and the team have also responded to consultations on issues such as the grading of exams and qualifications this year.

The most complex area has been how and when schools could or should begin to reopen, including how to implement social distancing. A consultation by ASCL with

members received more than 2,000 responses in one day.

Meanwhile, staff are still dealing with ongoing policy matters. Recent ones include:

- Giving a view on the latest proposals from the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB).
- Engaging with the DfE's expert advisory group on teacher and leader wellbeing.
- Working with the Association of Colleges, including on the Commission on the College of the Future.
- Working with the DfE on its survey on FE workforce issues.

## Boost for communications

ASCL has increased communications with members during the pandemic, giving daily updates on the key points in guidance and policy from the government.

A dedicated coronavirus hub on the website [www.ascl.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.ascl.org.uk/coronavirus) has been added to multiple times each day alongside daily emails to all members plus dedicated updates for members in Wales and Northern Ireland.

An email inbox for coronavirus-specific questions has also been set up to help the Member Support Hotline manage the high volume of questions. It has informed a long list

of frequently-asked questions (FAQs) now published on the website, [www.ascl.org.uk/Coronavirus-FAQs](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Coronavirus-FAQs)

Weekly Team ASCL webinars with ASCL staff, serving school leaders and external experts have covered topics from the implications of lockdown on school finances to help with curriculum planning, online learning and mental health [www.ascl.org.uk/professional-development/Team-ASCL-webinar](http://www.ascl.org.uk/professional-development/Team-ASCL-webinar)

"Such is the importance of all leaders being kept informed, we have opened up access to most of the coronavirus content to non-members," said Annette Wade, Director of Marketing

and Membership. "This, along with the high profile ASCL has maintained throughout the crisis and exceptional feedback from members who have been recommending ASCL to colleagues, has led to an incredible number of new members joining, bringing membership to a record high of 19,592 as of 30 April 2020."

Work on the dedicated Associates' website has been delayed as a result of the crisis but will restart later in the summer. There will be an update on progress in the next issue of *Associates News*.

## Reunion rescheduled and election results in

The Associates' annual reunion at Apsley House in London (pictured), due for May 2020, has been rescheduled for next year, the Associates Committee has confirmed.

"Everyone was disappointed not to be able to meet up again in May as it is always wonderful to see old friends at our reunions," said Ann Mullins, chair of the committee. "However, the postponement gives us something else to look forward to for next year when life, we hope, is approaching something like normal again."

The autumn walk for 2020 has also been cancelled while retirement seminars have also been temporarily suspended.

The committee 'met' via conference call in May, prevented from travelling to ASCL HQ in Leicester under the lockdown.

Other issues arising were:

- Tony Richardson said the Benevolent Fund Committee financial report 2019 had been approved. Inevitably due to school closures there had been a great reduction in the level of requests for support from the fund but it was felt that a sharp increase was inevitable from June onwards.
- A brief report from the Editorial Committee contained an outline of planned contents, putting emphasis on keeping the newsletter up to date and looking to the future.
- John Caperon, Philip Johnson, Peter Crowe and Robert Godber have been re-elected to the Associates' committee unopposed. The full list of associate committee members is: Paul Baker, Jill Belcher, John Caperon, Peter Crowe, Maureen Cruickshank, Robert Godber, Alex Green, Philip Johnson, Ann Mullins, Tony Richardson Pat Sales, Christine Shellard and ASCL's presidential trio.
- Associate membership stands at 1,976 as of April 2020. The next committee meeting will discuss work on a strategy to boost the numbers.
- Jill Belcher attended ASCL's annual conference in March - just before the lockdown began - and reported it was excellent as usual. The ASCL exhibition stands displayed Associates information and leaflets were available.

The next committee meetings – editorial and main committee – are set for Wednesday October 14.



## Tune in to a podcast



ASCL President Rachael Warwick reflects on the annual conference in March in the latest podcast with General Secretary Geoff Barton.

Rachael, Executive Head, Ridgeway Education Trust, chose diversity as the theme for her year in office and it was widely reflected at the conference.

"We saw an interpretation of diversity which is really multi-layered and nuanced from people talking about their own stories like Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton rising above adversity from a really difficult background, to people talking about cognitive diversity like Matthew Syed and the overlap with demographic diversity, so forcing us to think about things in a different way," she said. "And if anybody nailed diversity for our conference it was [poet and author]

Lemn Sissay (pictured left) who just said he doesn't have a problem with diversity because diversity is at the heart of who we are."

It was Rachael's decision to focus on diversity during her presidential year and Geoff asked her whether she was now confident that diversity had moved from being something potentially tokenistic to something more tangible.

"Yes, I think there's been a tipping point which was about collaboration, looking outwards and some of the grassroots groups have been fantastic and working alongside us, like WomenEd, BAMEed and LGBTed, and NGA [National Governance Association] as well. I think there's a head of steam which means we are now working in partnership with other organisations across the system which gives this work the momentum to continue over the years to come."

Every month, Geoff talks to leaders and experts in education about the burning topics for schools, colleges and policymakers.

The latest episode, put together as the full impact of the coronavirus outbreak was just starting to be felt, also features:

- Anne Heavey, National Director, Whole School SEND, on the future of special needs provision.
- Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at the Institute of Education, University College London, on research and teacher expertise, including what works on assessment in some schools and contexts but not in others.
- Jonathan Simons, Head of the Education Practice at policy and research specialists Public First, responding to the question: If you were Education Secretary what would you do to create a more socially just education system in the UK?

Go to [www.ascl.org.uk/News/Podcasts](http://www.ascl.org.uk/News/Podcasts)

## Pensions rise and online P60s

Pensions for public sector workers rose by 1.7% on April 6 2020

The Teachers' Pensions Authority has also announced that P60s are now available online at [www.teacherspensions.co.uk/members/faqs/p60.aspx](http://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/members/faqs/p60.aspx).

"People can still request a paper copy of a P60 but be advised that, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the call centre has issued a warning that they have high call volumes," said Stephen Casey, ASCL's Pensions Specialist.



# STAR OF THE SEAS

**Marie Stubbs on her experience as a cruise ship speaker and why she recommends the holidays as a way to expand your horizons, physical and intellectual**

I was invited to be what is called 'a celebrity speaker' by a major cruise line after I wrote *Ahead of the Class* in 2003, documenting my time leading St George's School in London out of special measures, which subsequently became a TV film starring the wonderful Julie Walters.

I already had experience of the professional lecture circuit, having spoken at organisations such as the Catholic University of Australia, London Business School, a range of businesses and to many, many schools and colleges. I focused on 'culture shifting' and motivation which were my main interests in terms of how school leadership could develop teachers to promote and enable good learning in their schools.

I spent seven enjoyable years giving talks to a variety of passengers while cruising to memorable places such as the Falkland Islands, the Caribbean, Iceland, Egypt and the Panama Canal, giving up to six talks per cruise and meeting many delightful people and fellow entertainment staff, some of whom became good friends.

I also enjoyed hearing passengers' own views and stories of their lives. Since everyone has been to school – albeit with different experiences – many a good conversation took place about the

marvellous teachers people fondly remembered... with the odd few who were recalled for other reasons. I had a strong feeling of how much people valued their teachers and often thought "Mr or Miss So and So" would have enjoyed being present to hear how much their work was valued.

Enjoyable, too, to dine with different people each evening and to chat over cocktails as the sun set.

I know that cruises are on hold at present but hopefully such an interesting and relaxing way to see the world will be open to us in the future. I recommend it.

**Lady Marie Stubbs was head of The Douay Martyrs for 13 years in West London and head of St George's in London (2000-2002) where she shot to fame leading a taskforce to help bring the school out of special measures.**

**She has an Instagram account and YouTube channel, encouraging older people to keep fit. Search on Google for Marie Stubbs Fit for Eighty!**



# GREAT ESCAPES

**Holidays are out for now but travel companies are taking bookings for cultural tours and trips in 2021**

Once we've become acclimatised to the 'new normal' – whatever that might be – next year, we'll probably need a break to get away from it all.

Long-haul flying could be out of the question for many in 2021 so why not let the train take the strain, travel in all-mod-cons coach or cruise the seven seas and major rivers in a giant boat?

Fred Olsen is offering a tour of French and Spanish cities in June with prices starting at around £1,800 (May 2020). [www.fredolsencruises.com/cruise/france-and-spain-with-seville-m2113](http://www.fredolsencruises.com/cruise/france-and-spain-with-seville-m2113)

You'll be on the cruise ship Braemar which, due to its smaller size, takes tourists right into the heart of cities like Seville and La Coruna without the need for another off-shore jaunt on an intermediary vessel.

In the former, you can enjoy the Alcázar Palace and the magnificent cathedral along with a traditional flamenco show and a Strictly-style dance class.

There's also the chance to drink in the maritime heritage of La Coruna and Cadiz's picturesque narrow streets and tapas bars, topping the trip off with a visit to Nantes and the vineyards of the Loire Valley.

If you fancy something a little closer to home, Royal Scottish offers a range of cruises around the Scottish isles; departing from Oban, the trips last three days or more and take you to some of the most spectacular scenery and castles you could wish to see, all accompanied by ancient tales (and possibly even some local hooch) [www.theroyalscottish.com/](http://www.theroyalscottish.com/)

The Mull and Iona voyage, for example, takes you to sandy beaches and craggy headlands with their astounding bird populations, deep waters with their seals, bottle-nose dolphins and killer whales and unforgettable locations like Fingal's Cave.

Italy is rightly famed for its food, art and architecture but who knew that it had a better-than-average rail network?

It's so good, in fact, that a hosted train tour is probably the best way to get around the country and Great Rail Journeys offers a range of journeys to great cities and lakes. [www.greatrail.com/holiday-destinations/europe/italy/](http://www.greatrail.com/holiday-destinations/europe/italy/)

The Rome, Sorrento and Amalfi Coast sojourn includes guided tours of the capital and Pompeii, trips to Positano, the ruins of Herculaneum and a fashionable food-and-drink spectacular on the island of Capri.

The trip takes 12 days, costs around £2,500 and begins at St Pancras where Eurostar will take you to Paris where you switch to the high-speed TGV to Chambéry.

Bus fans are also well catered-for. Leger Holidays offer a wide range of coach trips including a Highlights of Eastern

Europe package which takes in some great cities such as Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest and Prague [www.leger.co.uk/](http://www.leger.co.uk/)

The 14-day tour picks up at a number of convenient points and prices start at £1359pp or £2718 for two people.



**Top: Florence, Italy  
Right: Highland Cattle, Iona, Scotland  
Left: French castle garden pathway  
Bottom: Iona, Scotland**

# LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED

**Chris Lowe is compiling *Telling Tales Out of School*, an anthology of stories based on his own and others' classroom experiences over five decades. Here, we share two of the 50-plus he has collated so far**



two heads separately. The inspectors were keen to draw out the educational philosophy of the two heads and to enable them to explain to the governors their approaches to comprehensive education. They had listened to the grammar school head's erudite and thorough analysis of curriculum reform, developments in the theory of large school management, and the latest pupil behaviour management theory.

All four now sat in front of Ken, the secondary modern head. Behind him on the wall was a large framed timetable, the week's periods neatly ruled in horizontal and vertical lines, making squares with names of classes, teachers and the rooms they occupied for each lesson, beautifully written in felt-tip pen and all in glorious colour.

Eyeing this Picasso-esque work of art, the lead inspector – a woman with much experience of running comprehensive schools and a formidable reputation in inspection circles – sought to get the conversation going.

"This looks like a very impressive secondary modern timetable, headmaster. Tell us how you would transfer this to the new comprehensive school?"

She leaned back, waiting. This would demonstrate the depth of Ken's knowledge about comprehensive education and his understanding of

the major shift that would be required from his secondary modern culture. She would be very interested in his answer and would make sure the governors appreciated the importance, too.

There was silence, and then Ken swivelled round in his chair and stared up at the timetable.

"How would it transfer? Easy, really. I will just unscrew it and take it over in my car."

There was another moment of silence. The inspector squirmed.

"I did not mean how you would physically move it, I meant . . ."

"It's all right," laughed Ken, putting his hand out to stop any further embarrassment.

"I know what you meant. But I thought we were all a bit tense. Now, let's discuss not WHAT we will teach at the new school, because that will largely be dictated by the National Curriculum and the teachers and students we already have.

"To me, the important changes are going to be in HOW we teach and how WELL we teach. Our concentration should be on creating a powerful teaching force, don't you think?"

Ken got the new job and the new school became one of the happiest amalgamations and the jolliest of places . . . and the framed timetable found a home in his personal toilet.

## A cat's tale is the secret to grammar success

This story finds our hero back in 1961 when his starting salary as a teacher, even with the London weighting, was just £525 per year, about £40 per month after deductions. In order to pay the rent, he teaches evening classes at the local FE college

My pupils were young apprentices who had to take compulsory Uses of Literacy courses as part of their professional certification.

You will not be surprised that the vast majority of them did not want anything to do with it. On the other hand, they were more than happy to show their displeasure in the usual ways – too painful for me to recount now, or even recall.

It was certainly vital for me to grab their interest, even if for only a few minutes of the hour-long sessions.

The immediate task, it seemed to me, was to improve their grammar, spelling, and punctuation – not the most attractive of missions for educating plumbers, electricians and bricklayers. They were not taken in by my claim that they would benefit by being able to write a good job application or a polite request for a client to pay an outstanding bill.

"We've got our own ways for those," they told me. "We've never had any problem getting people to understand us."

I suggested treating it as a challenge to achieve something they had not managed before, a prospect that appealed to them

"Right," said Lenny the Ladder, an apprentice scaffolder, "I'll give it a

go but only so long as you don't bore the pants off me, right?"

"Right, Lenny," I countered, "it's a deal." The rest of the group fell in line.

I strained very, very, hard to make it fun. A joke here, a mystery there, laughter everywhere – anything to disguise the fact that I was on a knife-edge.

The technique that appealed to them most – to my surprise – was my invention of 'the cat sat on the mat' routine, the learner's easy guide to learning punctuation, and sentence construction.

I used 'The cat sat on the mat. It lapped its milk,' to demonstrate the use of a full stop, which could only be replaced by a joining word 'and' or 'but' or by making one of the sentences into a clause, not a sentence.

Unaccountably, they cottoned on to this – in their own inimitable way. First, they demanded to know the name of the cat.

Right. Fair enough.

I thought of 'Sam' – since my family had once looked after a friend's Siamese 'Sam', which had ripped my shirt to pieces when I had offered it tinned cat food instead of salmon.

But they rejected that immediately, simply because one of them had a girlfriend, Sam.

They threw out more – 'Tabby', 'Orlando', 'Moggy' (that got close to acceptance, but two carpenters considered that 'our cat' deserved a better name), 'Felix'?

We eventually hit – unanimously – on 'Figgy' simply because one apprentice plumber, announced that he had had a cat called Figaro. His plumber dad was mad keen on Mozart's operas.

So, for the rest of the ten-week term they made up hundreds of versions of 'the cat' and 'the mat', and why it 'sat'. And they loved it. I did not know why then, and I do not know why now.

I had to incorporate the two sentences into everything I taught them. If I went on too long at some other exercise, they would demand to know if my cat was ill or was stuck on the mat.

So, I used this for ever more in my teaching, usually ending with a challenge for the longest correctly punctuated sentence, which did not use the same word twice (except for the definite and indefinite articles and words of two letters). Everywhere I went it was a hit.

The most imaginative response to the exercise was by a smart 11-year old (now, by the way, an eminent professor):

"When the cat had at last seen fit to sit down, having found a convenient mat on which to perform this deed, and after having discovered milk, which had been placed in a bowl, she, or possibly 'he', decided that it might be delightful to consume the said liquid as quickly as possible, and so the feline practised a lapping movement with its tongue, which turned out to be just right for the task in hand, or paw, so that it very soon finished all the beverage, leaving it with a satisfied look on its face, and a great deal of whiteness around the mouth."

**Chris Lowe was head of Prince William School in Oundle, Northamptonshire from 1971 to 1999 and President of the Secondary Heads Association (ASCL's predecessor) 1990-1991.**

# CLASSROOM TO COURTROOM

**After a 40-year career in education, Amena Hassanali-Sutton continues by serving her community as a magistrate. She describes how her teaching experiences stood her in good stead for her new role**



**Amena Hassanali-Sutton has been a JP since 2019**

I joined the teaching profession in September 1978 having completed a degree in Zoology at Queen Mary College, University of London, and a PGCE from the University of Oxford.

I returned to my homeland, Trinidad and Tobago, to begin teaching, later returning to Oxford for a year to do a Master's degree. Marriage eventually brought me back to the city permanently in 1983 and I was fortunate to be employed straight away, teaching in four Oxfordshire secondary schools over 25 years before spending the last nine-and-a-half years at a school in Wokingham.

Including a gap year stint as an unqualified teacher at a school in Trinidad, I spent a total of 40 years in secondary education, the last 24 of which were in senior leadership.

I held a wide range of positions during that time, line managing just about every subject department and leading on initial teacher education, pastoral care, sixth form, safeguarding, staff development, curriculum development and teaching and learning. I also served as an assistant head for six years, and deputy for 18 years with an acting headship and a shared headship in between. I even wrote two full timetables!

Leaving the classroom in December 2017, I applied to become a Justice of

the Peace (magistrate), enduring two gruelling interviews which really made me empathise with the numerous teachers I sat opposite during the same process in schools over the years.

That was followed by five days of extremely intensive training during which I learnt a huge amount about the administration of justice and the rule of law. The swearing-in ceremony was a grand affair in the Oxford Crown Court, led by the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Oxfordshire as well as the presiding judge.

I was particularly proud to be sworn in during the 100th year of women serving as magistrates in the UK in 2019. Today, women make up 56% of the magistracy in England and Wales.

I have been sitting on the Oxford Bench regularly since April last year and it has been a real privilege to serve my

community in this way. Magistrates sit as a bench of three and I have learned a great deal from my more experienced and learned colleagues.

Teaching was, in many ways, good preparation for this role. As teachers, we are used to listening attentively, to discussing with colleagues and

**As teachers, we are used to listening attentively, to discussing with colleagues and weighing up evidence before making informed decisions**

weighing up evidence before making informed decisions and working as a team. These are the very skills I have been able to transfer to my role on the bench and administering fair justice.

At times it is a real challenge but, as teachers, we are used to that as there are difficult decisions to be

made which can influence the lives of the young people in our daily care. As magistrates, the decisions we make can seriously affect the lives of individuals and families.

There are guidelines for sentencing, and we have the services of a legal adviser who provides us with points of law that we may need to make our decisions. We work closely as a team of equals.

In helping to re-shape the lives of convicted defendants through rehabilitation or by punishing crime, we ensure that the community is

kept safe. This is a highly responsible, voluntary role but one that is bringing me great satisfaction.

**Amena Hassanali-Sutton was senior vice-principal at Waingels College, Wokingham from 2008 to 2017.**

## 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.)

# SONG IN HER HEART



**Pat Collings is dancing to a different tune and having the time of her life in her role as patron of – and a performer in – an innovative music charity funded by second-hand book sales**

Over the years, I have done my fair share of rattling tins for charity, braving guard dogs for street collections and sponsoring people for fundraising runs.

Recently I have been a lay member of hospital panels for interviewing potential nurses and physiotherapists and contributed to the caring element in nurse education programmes at the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham.

So far, so predictable. However, my current role as an enthusiastic member and patron of the East Midlands charity, Music for Everyone, is probably the most satisfying.

It does what it says on the tin. There is a fine chamber choir, a festival chorus for all-comers which is often 240 strong – we recently performed Brahms' German Requiem – weekly sessions for voices and orchestras in four venues and open sing-alongs for learning disabled adults.

On top of that, there are the one-off instrumental and singing events for all ages and competences, Christmas concerts and so on, all of which was the brainchild of the inspirational Angela Kay who was a teaching colleague in the 1970s.

The charity has grown supported by strong trustees and volunteers whose jobs range from tea-making to stuffing envelopes. However, the major funding stream comes from three high-quality second-hand bookshops called Bookwise which contribute more than £40,000 each year which pays for the administrative staff.

My role is a weekly slot on the rota of people willing to give two or three hours to the shop. Selling is a joy though I also play my part in receiving, cleaning, pricing and shelving the donations which range from a single bag to an academic's entire library.

My regular Saturday slot is usually the busiest of the week in terms of sales and keeps me happily at the till dealing with customers until end-of-day administration and the locking-up routine. Co-workers share tasks such as replenishing stock or sorting, cleaning and pricing new donations so there is rarely time for a cup of tea.

Other members of the team excel at window display, organising back-room stock or sorting and pricing our significant sheet music section. The annual Christmas drinks session is the only time we are guaranteed to meet volunteers from other days and from the other two shops.

I revel in the wonderful cross-section of people who cross the threshold of our Goosegate shop in the Creative Quarter of Nottingham's Lace Market. Many exclaim that they are walking into a treasure trove and really do not need more books, but they rarely leave empty-handed.

There is a constant stream of student browsers during term-time who bring their parents from all over the world. I get to speak in French or Italian, help choose a suitable gift for a friend or relative, introduce people to beautifully-bound and tooled antique books, offer guidance to travellers and occasionally sweep the floor.

As I lock up, Nottingham's nightlife is underway and I can't wait to bury my head in a book on the tram-ride home . . .

**Pat Collings was head of Sinfin Community School, Derby from 1984-1997 and went on to be a leadership consultant.**

**In tune: the charity Music for Everyone celebrates music in many forms**



# THE PAST IS ANOTHER COUNTRY

**Tony Richardson recalls how wise words from his old headteacher broke some late-1950s authoritarian shackles and provided inspiration for his own career as a head**



A short time ago, I met a friend who had attended the girls' grammar school in the Midlands market town where I was contemporaneously a pupil at the boys' grammar.

I had not been back there for many years, but we found ourselves standing by the churchyard, through which pupils of both schools walked on their way into town.

We were surprised to find ourselves – in our late 70s – hesitant about which side we should walk on and whether we could walk together, so strong was the rule – or was it just a convention? – that one was for the girls and the other for the boys.

It led us to recall how deferential and authoritarian were the times we lived in then.

She recalled how she hated being made to play hockey in her knickers on a field that bordered the main road but how it didn't occur to her or any of her friends that they might be able to question it.

I recalled how certain I was, when shots rang out in the orchard where I was scrumping apples, that the owner was aiming to kill me rather than just warning me off.

Furthermore, that if he had succeeded, my parents would say that it had served me right.

We believed, in the past that was such a foreign country, that all adults were on the same side and would mutually enforce each other's rules. If I saw a policeman, I would put my school cap back on.

That acceptance of the established order of things enabled prefects, some in the uniform of the school cadet force, to manage all school routines, such as lining up for assembly or for lunch.

They could hand out lines or bizarre punishments like copying out a hymn backwards and expect, on the whole, not to be challenged. Most bizarrely, they could administer corporal punishment in the form of slipping.

How shameful it now seems that we referred to that as 'the privilege'.

Change was coming. As head boy in 1959, I must have got some scent of that wind of change when I asked the newly-appointed headmaster to withdraw 'the privilege'.

Wisely, the headmaster withdrew it from everyone except the head boy urging him to live with his principles. If you can support your prefects without resorting to that kind of punishment, all is well and good, he added.

What a lesson for a future headteacher!

**Tony Richardson was head of Ormskirk Grammar School in Lancashire, 1987-1998.**

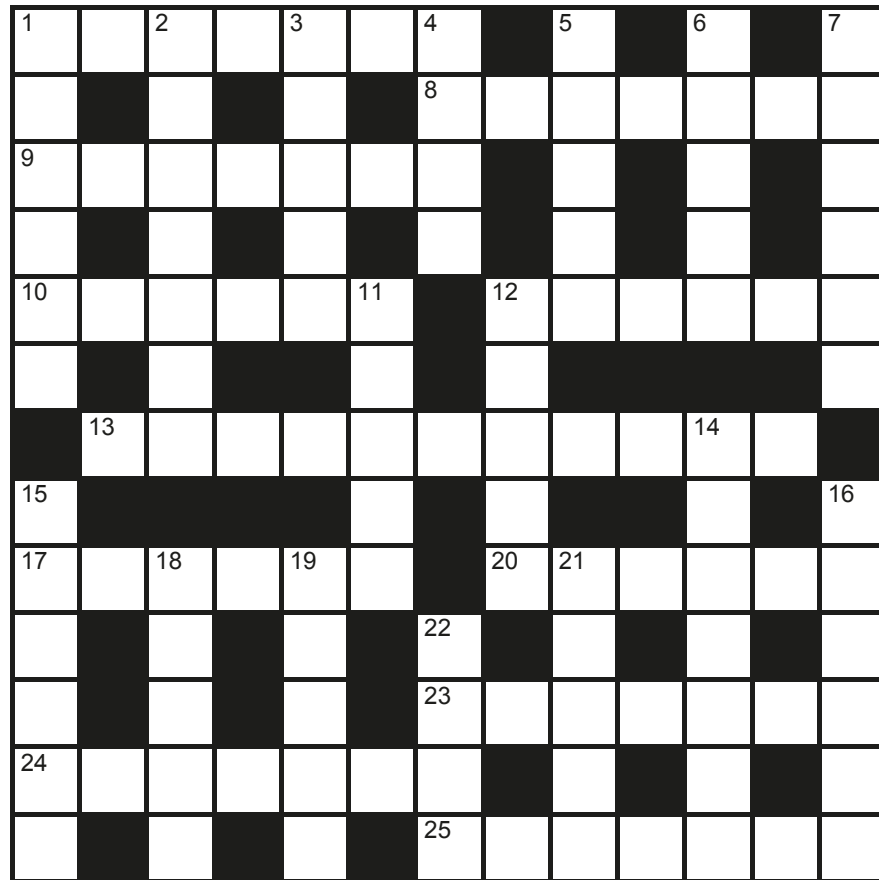


Across

- 1 Dessert sauce (7)
- 8 Pear-shaped fruit (7)
- 9 Slanted letters (7)
- 10 Former British gold coin worth 21 shillings (6)
- 12 Have a lofty goal (6)
- 13 Doggedness, perseverance (11)
- 17 Guts, intestines (6)
- 20 Hydrophobia (6)
- 23 Reflect a flickering light (7)
- 24 Come before (7)
- 25 Instants (7)

Down

- 1 Draw back, as with fear or pain (6)
- 2 Shore next to the coast (7)
- 3 Come up (5)
- 4 Hyphen (4)
- 5 Sailing vessels (5)
- 6 Prickly desert plants (5)
- 7 Made a curtsy (6)
- 11 Haywire (5)
- 12 On the move (5)
- 14 Common farmyard bird (7)
- 15 Sudden (6)
- 16 Appraise (6)
- 18 Long-legged water bird (5)
- 19 Brand name (5)
- 21 Generally accepted truth (5)
- 22 Article (4)



Word Search - States of America

- ◇ ALASKA
- ◇ NEW HAMPSHIRE
- ◇ HAWAII
- ◇ OHIO
- ◇ IDAHO
- ◇ OKLAHOMA
- ◇ INDIANA
- ◇ OREGON
- ◇ IOWA
- ◇ TEXAS
- ◇ KANSAS
- ◇ UTAH
- ◇ MAINE
- ◇ VERMONT
- ◇ MONTANA
- ◇ WISCONSIN
- ◇ NEVADA
- ◇ WYOMING



# GRADUATING TO A NEW ROLE

## Diana Gant has transferred her school experience to the university realm as a governor

When we moved to Worcester six years ago the university here was advertising for independent governors and a friend encouraged me to apply.

After retiring as head of The Mount School, York in August 2009 I had built up a body of experience in volunteering in a range of roles, including being a guide at York Minster (a protracted process involving a week's full time course, a written examination and a practical once I'd worked up my script) where there are so many visitors I'd end up with groups of 40-50 at busy times of the year.

I'd trained with the charity Home-Start UK to support families with pre-school children who needed extra help. They varied from a professional woman whose family lived overseas and who had read so much she didn't know which advice to follow and a very young mum with a severely disabled baby, to women who had been relocated after domestic violence and were terrified to go out in case 'he' was going to stalk them and discover where they lived.

I'd also been a governor at York St John University for three terms of three years, after being invited to join the governing body by the principal, Professor Dianne Willcocks. It was fascinating being so involved as the College was awarded teaching degree awarding powers, followed by university status and finally research degree awarding powers.

After going through effectively a recruitment process at Worcester, with a written application, references and interviews, I was selected and am now in the first year of my second term of four years, and chairing the HR committee.



Universities, like schools, need to recruit a diverse range of governors with a wide range of skills and backgrounds, including business, finance, legal and education. Full meetings of the governing body are held at least once a term, with sub-committees, seminars, training courses and invitations to many university activities from lectures and exhibitions to sporting and student union events. We provide oversight and scrutiny, taking care not to stray into operational management issues. We are particularly involved in strategic development planning.

As I was a head and had been a head of careers earlier in my teaching career, I had a lot of experience of guidance and reference writing for UCAS applications, so knew something about universities. Both of the institutions with which I've been involved have been post-1992 universities, known to be small, friendly, inclusive and taking many students from low participation areas. They have opened my eyes to how different these are from the higher education I received at King's College London in the 1960s.

I feel privileged to have been part of both governing bodies and have loved my involvement with these dynamic and innovative institutions. My favourite time of the year is Graduation Week in November when Worcester Cathedral is filled, several times over, with excited graduates and their proud families.

I can't imagine not volunteering as it gives me enormous pleasure, a great group of friends and always something different to talk about at home.

Diana Gant was head of the Mount School, York from January 2001-2009.

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

C	U	S	T	A	R	D	B	C	B		
R	E	R	A	V	O	C	A	D	O		
I	T	A	L	I	C	S	A	C	B		
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**WORDSEARCH**

W	D	M	E	X	O	Z	H	T	T	V	Y	G
I	A	A	I	G	H	C	N	K	G	V	C	
S	R	Z	H	I	T	V	J	O	F	N	A	H
C	M	O	G	E	N	C	O	M	F	I	N	A
O	U	O	X	J	E	E	Y	R	I	M	A	W
N	A	A	N	C	W	S	J	E	D	O	I	A
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A	Z	T	L	N	P	S	A	L	G	C	A	P
N	W	M	N	A	S	F	A	E	A	T	G	A
Y	F	O	F	C	H	Q	R	S	U	S	H	P
A	D	J	I	K	I	O	N	O	N	A	K	R
Y	V	E	F	C	R	C	M	X	U	A	Y	A
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# ROLE MODELS REMEMBERED

**Mourning two inspirational colleagues in the space of a month, Keith Barron realised he was probably witnessing the passing of a type of teacher that might be vanishing for good**

Two crucial figures from the first half of my teaching career died in February, their funerals taking place in ancient village churches on damp wintry days.

First Chris (Dr Waller), my head at Eltham College, South-East London (1983-1990); then Bill Corpe, my head of department in my first job at St Dunstan's College, also in London (1972-1982).

Both were dedicated to learning – from which profound teaching springs – and both were devoted to something that now sounds archaic – scholarship. Bill retired and Chris resigned in 1990, but we had written to each other across the years.

Bright grammar schoolboys, they both went to Cambridge. Consummate teachers, they were remembered with deep gratitude and affection. What made them great was their reading; that can, of course, lead to pedantry – we all know the type – unless there is reflection and profound understanding of how to enthuse, communicate and inspire.

Chris continued to teach well beyond the typical retirement age at Clifton College, Bristol. Why should teaching the young, inspiring love of thinking and learning and a passion for books ever stop? In age you should have gained wisdom; he was working on his third PhD!

Bill's path was different: settled in the small village community of Dent, deep in the Cumbrian fells, where he became a local force producing plays and singing in the church choir.

As head, Chris led by example, energising the whole school. After

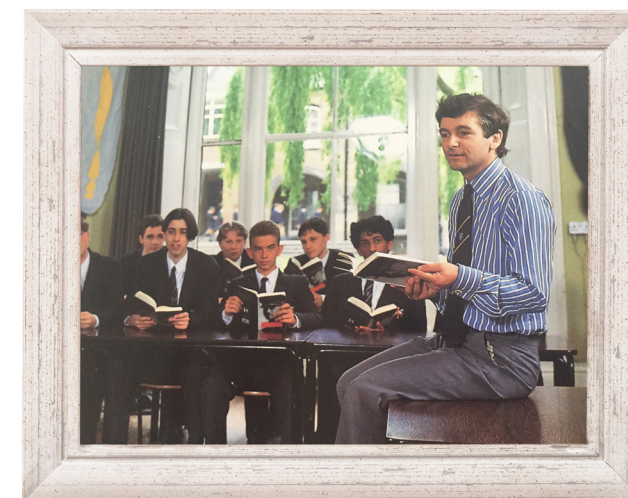
an open day, every pupil would receive a letter of thanks and he continued to be a prolific communicator, sending cards to his grandchildren every week.

His morning chapel addresses were intellectually provoking. One was on the pen being mightier than the sword; another on the film *Mississippi Burning*.

Chris gave unwavering support for my department's ambitious A level course after Bill introduced me to the possibility through the O level course he ran. I realised just how ambitious one could be. For our O level, we set a wide-ranging coursework paper based on a theme, such as The Young American or War Literature. Three set books, an essay on each (no rewriting) plus wider reading to contribute to the 2,000 word all-embracing essay covering five or six texts.

At Eltham, I proposed an ambitious A level course to the Cambridge Board: four books a term (no re-writes), covering three centuries, followed by a seminar essay on a writer of their choice, followed by a long essay on two authors.

We received lengthy and adulatory feedback from our moderator and achieved better results than the rest of the school. In the summer half-term, we took the entire lower sixth for a study week of seminars, visits,



**Heads up - Keith Barron teaching at Eltham in the early 1990s (photo credit Eltham College)**

lectures and creative writing in the Lake District, focusing on Wordsworth, the landscape tradition and C18th poetry.

Though their personalities were different, both Bill and Chris showed faith and trust in me and enabled me and my colleagues to inspire deep learning. With their passing, I not only mourned them, but mourned the passing of a type of teacher that might be vanishing, burdened as young teachers are with assessment objectives, targets, pedagogical policies – all of which have their place, and all of which I steered in the latter half of my career.

But above all we must not lose sight of the importance of independence of mind.

**Keith Barron was senior master at Eltham College before he retired in 2012.**

# Financial advice during difficult times

Would you like to help members of your family who are suffering financially during this difficult time? Or maybe you would like to be sure that your own savings and financial arrangements are in good shape.

As ASCL's Premier Partner for professional financial advice, we are here to help you navigate your way through these uncertain times. For example, we can help you:

- review any pensions you have outside the Teachers' or Local Government pension scheme in light of the current conditions
- work out whether you should consider reducing the amount you are withdrawing from any additional pensions in order to reduce the risk of running out of money
- generate additional income from other savings you may have
- give away a regular amount each month tax-free if you have surplus income
- use the various allowances that enable you to give away certain amounts of capital tax-free each year.

In addition, we can check that your other financial affairs are in order. For instance, if you are worried about how you, or a relative, will pay for long-term care, we can give you the specialist advice you need to make the right financial decisions. Also, we can suggest legitimate ways of reducing inheritance tax – any amount above the threshold is taxed at 40%.

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