

# ASSOCIATES NEWS



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Our pick of the UK's summer fairs, fetes and festivals p11

## Going loco

Let the train take the strain around beautiful Britain p14

## Marking time

The early days of recording pupil achievement p18



# CONTACT

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# E-NEWSLETTER

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)

Cover image credit:  
Cheshire steam engines, Phil Tugwell.

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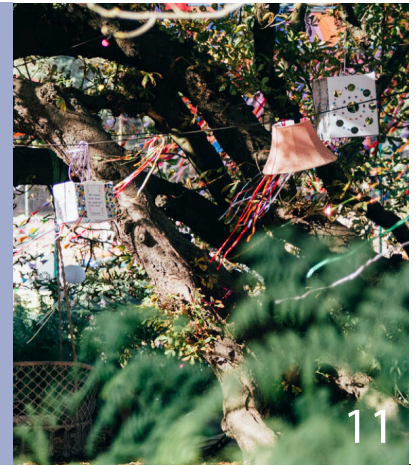
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# TEENAGE KICKS

## School leaders deserve credit for putting in the extra effort needed to respond to changing attitudes among our young people, says Geoff Barton

As a description of our journey through life, no one could ever beat Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man speech in *As You Like It*.

As the melancholy nobleman Jacques says, we each begin as an infant, "mewling and puking". Years on, we end in our dotage, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

It's a pithy, if depressing, summary of what life entails.

But actress and national treasure June Whitfield came a close second to the Bard when she offered:

"The three ages of man: youth, middle age, and 'My word, you do look well!'"

That's more like it.

Let's focus on the first of those: youth.

My guess is that you'll have come into education for two reasons. First, there

**'I saw the school's values lived out in the corridors and classrooms'**

may well be a teacher in your past who opened your eyes and your mind to a world you didn't know existed – the natural world, literature, the subject you went on to specialise in or the satisfaction of sporting success.

### Make a difference

Secondly, I'm guessing that your mission to become a teacher was driven by a desire to make a difference to children and young people – to give them the same mind-opening experience that our own teachers gave us.

We were inspired in our youth; we wish to inspire others who are in their youth.

It's why, at its best, being a teacher and then becoming a leader is one of the greatest things we could choose to do.



But some of us are worrying about our young people.

I spoke to one headteacher recently, someone on her third headship, and she said to me: "Geoff, you wouldn't recognise how things are in schools right now. Young people have changed."

Now, we all know that, even in normal times, schools have their ups and downs. We start each new term with an emphasis on standards, encouraging staff to clamp down on uniform transgressions, to turn no blind eyes to low-level disruption, to be absolutely consistent in enforcing the school's behaviour policy.

We know that, at certain times, that all can start to unravel. I used to feel, as headteacher, that the period from November to March was the toughest – dark nights, bone-aching weariness of staff, tempers fraying, the litter problem growing, behaviour generally feeling less under our control.

But then the prospect of lighter days, better weather, tests and exams on the horizon would focus our minds and lift our spirits. Optimism returned, as the sunshine did.

But something has, indeed, changed.

The psychologist Jean Twenge has studied mental health and social behaviour for decades and now says she has "never seen anything like it. The arrival of the smartphone has radically changed every aspect of teenagers' lives, from the nature of their social interactions to their mental health."

Earlier this year, I spent a day at a school in Lancashire. It's a truly comprehensive local authority school, a bit ugly on the outside because of its 1960s buildings, but dead impressive on the inside.

It was a school that articulated its values and where I saw those values lived out in the corridors and classrooms. But I know from talking to the staff and looking in on lessons that this is now much tougher.

### Level of challenge

The level of the challenge about uniform, attendance and basic expectations has increased. Support from parents can no longer be relied upon in the same way as it once might have been.

Times have changed and life in schools is tougher. Other agencies – social care, mental health, the police – have melted away. But what I saw on my school visit was superb behaviour, uniform and attitudes. Yet I also saw how much harder staff were having to work to make it happen.

As our associates well know, it takes something special to be a school leader; to continue to rise to the challenges that emerge and to inspire other people to join you in taking on those challenges.

It's all the more reason that, in these turbulent times, we pay tribute to the extraordinary leaders that ASCL represents.

# NEWS ROUND-UP

## Editorial committee report

The ASCL Associates' editorial committee gathered in person at ASCL's Leicester HQ and online for the first of their twice-yearly meetings for 2023. Present were Robert Godber, Pauline Thomas, Peter Crowe, Julie Nightingale (online), Jayne Ferns, Maureen Cruickshank, and Philip Johnston.

In a review of the latest edition of Associates News Robert highlighted the historic homes and garden feature and noted the quality of Jayne's design work. Andrew MacTavish's article, *He has done the maths*, was also praised. There was a suggestion to make the crossword puzzle more challenging, if possible.

The group agreed the development of the newsletter has been very positive and the quality of the spring 2023 edition was also commended in an email sent to the group by ASCL General Secretary Geoff Barton. Geoff's continuing support is much appreciated.

For future issues, coverage of the ASCL Benevolent Fund could be expanded as it is a rich source of potential stories. There are two possible ABF features in the pipeline.

Pauline Thomas highlighted the need to raise awareness among readers that anyone can contribute material (see page 7).

Editor Julie Nightingale renewed the general call for more material on topics such as post-retirement hobbies, unusual holiday destinations, courses undertaken or volunteer work, including pictures where possible. Ahead of ASCL's 150th anniversary celebrations in 2024, the newsletter is keen to feature associates' own

recollections of their involvement with the association and its predecessors.

It was Robert's final editorial meeting and he was thanked for his support and work with the committee.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 11 October 2023.



L-R: Peter Crowe, Robert Godber, Pauline Thomas, Philip Johnston and Maureen Cruickshank

## ASCL is 150

ASCL celebrates 150 years of representing school leaders next year and we're looking for your recollections of the association and its predecessor organisations.

Do you recall a major policy victory or a clash with government? A fiery Council meeting, something entertaining, bizarre or ridiculous happening at conference? An inspirational moment or a celebrated turning point? Whether it's a great leap forward for the association, a difficult challenge or just your own personal memories of working with the association, we'd like to hear from you. And if you have pictures of people and events please share them, too.

Send your stories to [associatesnews@ascl.org.uk](mailto:associatesnews@ascl.org.uk) and mark them 'ASCL 150' and we will publish a selection in *Associates News* in 2024.

ASCL's history – see feature P16

6 [www.ascl.org.uk/associates](http://www.ascl.org.uk/associates)

## Case studies call

Associates are being invited to take part in some case studies for the Associates website.

The site at [www.ascl.org.uk/Associates](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Associates) will be undergoing more development later in the year to include more insights into members' post-retirement lives and the site team are looking for people willing to be interviewed, ideally on video.

The focus will be on sharing experiences of voluntary work, ongoing links to education or any other ways in which people are spending their time.

Video recording can be done at ASCL's Leicester HQ or online from the person's home.

If you would like to be involved, contact the team at [website@ascl.org.uk](mailto:website@ascl.org.uk)



# We want your stories

Associates News invites you to contribute

MISCELLANY

## ON THE MENU – FROZEN RABBIT AND PRITT STICKS

Last year, Tim Withers retired at the Academy Trust (PAT), in Wiltshire...

MISCELLANY

## THE HARDINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE SWIMMER

Associates News is all about members and most of the content is generated by associates themselves; they propose ideas then the editorial team, put forward a suggestion via the Associates Committee, or send in features and reviews.

And we'd love to hear from more of you.

People draw on their experiences of life post-retirement, whether it's volunteering, working with charities, pursuing hobbies, or taking on new working roles. These experiences can yield fascinating and sometimes

moving insights that other members greatly enjoy. Working as a magistrate, being a volunteer carer, learning languages, recollections of the impact of the 1984 miners' strike and exotic school trips, are just some of the subjects we've covered in the past.

Members also write about their own recollections of life in teaching and life in general; book and film reviews and holiday recommendations are very welcome, as are suggestions for our 'lifestyle' features (see P11 for an example). We also publish obituaries.

You don't need to be an established writer to contribute as our editorial team can help you make the most of your idea in words and pictures.

If you would like to contribute in any way, then please email us at [associatesnews@ascl.org.uk](mailto:associatesnews@ascl.org.uk) and giving an outline of your idea, as brief or as detailed as you like and we will get in touch.

As a sage once said, when you're looking for inspiration, no idea is too small or too stupid – all thoughts welcome!

FEATURE

## TIME OF MY LIFE

Kc... Valentine recalls being impressed by the enthusiasm during morning exercises on a school visit to China, less so... And then there was the terracotta plate...

on, I had  
My  
'e an  
round

I had arrived with a clear sense of what I wanted to achieve from the project. Student Council links, some inter-department connections with our science and geography departments, and to build a lasting relationship between my school and... these were



FEATURE

## HOW THE LIGHT FADES

Associate member describes... of dementia on... the family... mothers





## Podcasts round-up

In the latest edition of his Leadership podcast, Geoff Barton talks to Professor Sam Twiselton, director of the Institute of Education at Sheffield Hallam University, about tackling the recruitment and retention crisis in teaching.

Prof Twistleton says workload and stress as well as lower levels of pay are issues that are putting younger people off becoming teachers; they do not see the kind of job flexibility they are after, she adds.

Working from home is also a huge consideration, says Prof Twistleton, who adds that her own children are young graduates who are taking a 'portfolio' approach to

working rather than wanting to do the same things all the time.

### Working internationally

Working internationally is also very attractive to them, she says, so the profession has to think creatively about career pathways involving possible roles across many schools rather than in just one institution.

Meanwhile, the Business Brunch podcast features a conversation between Hayley Dunn, ASCL Business Leadership Specialist, Louise Hatswell, ASCL Conditions of Employment Specialist: Pay, and Julia Harnden, ASCL Funding Specialist.

They discuss topics including the annual conference, the spring budget, budget assumptions, and the DfE's Academies regulatory and commission review report.

In the Primary podcast, ASCL's Primary Specialist Tiffnie Harris talks to Dr Tony Eade, academic, former primary headteacher and founder of the organisation Humanities 20:20, about the importance of the Humanities in the primary curriculum.

Other ASCL podcast topics include SEND plus trusts and chats with other ASCL experts.

Listen to all of the discussions at [www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts](http://www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts)



# PENSIONS UPDATE

## Jacques Szemalikowski explains the implications for pensions and retrofit options arising from the Budget

The biggest rabbit that Chancellor Jeremy Hunt pulled out of his hat in the Spring Budget was the effective abolition of the Lifetime Allowance (LTA) charge.

Many associates will be painfully aware that, at point of accessing benefits (crystallisation), HMRC placed a limit on the total value of a pension fund which you could access without a tax liability – the LTA Charge.

It varied over the years but in 2022-23 and the preceding three years it was £1,073,100, with anything above that taxed at 25%. If you were in-scope, any LTA charge will have been deducted from your annuity proportionately over time, as outlined on your original award statement.

This is usually around 20 years for actuarially morbid reasons!

From April 2023, no one will pay a lifetime allowance tax charge. Apologies associates, but for the avoidance of doubt, this cannot be retrofitted.

### Lump sum

LTA is chargeable at the point of crystallising a benefit. Consequently,

Pensions accessed on or before 5 April 2023 were subject to the LTA charge; pensions accessed on 6 April 2023 onwards are not. What has not changed is the limit that you can access from all and any pensions as a tax-free lump sum, which is £268,275.

However, some associates may have untouched second pensions, such as Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) or an LGPS/TPS toggle. If these have not yet been accessed in any way, then the good news is these will no longer be subject to an LTA charge.

Moreover, it may be worth looking back at your actual benefit statement specifically from April 2016.

If, on 5 April 2016, your capitalised pension value exceeded the LTA of £1m, you can still apply to HMRC for individual protection 2016 (IP16). This allows you to protect your LTA at its 2016 value up to £1.25m and can be retrofitted even to a pension in payment.

Going forward, although LTA charge no longer applies, IP16 may still allow you take a larger tax-free lump sum.

Meanwhile, the Public Service Pensions (McCloud) Remedy

continues to move forwards. This affects associates who were in pensionable service on 1 April 2012 and still in service after 1 April 2015.

Starting in late 2023, you will be offered what is called an 'Immediate Choice Underpin'. This will be a one-off, no detriment, free choice as to how you wish any benefits for service April 1 2015 to March 31 2022 to be calculated.

The choice will be between the legacy final salary scheme that you originally joined (NPA60), or the reformed career average scheme that everybody is now on (NPA67).

You will be presented with an illustration for each of these and will want to consider these carefully. It's a binary choice – not pick'n'mix. Please do not assume that the final salary scheme is necessarily the best for the years in scope.

If necessary, choices will be fully retrofitted.



**Jacques Szemalikowski is ASCL Conditions of Employment Specialist, Pensions**

# INERTIA RULES

## 'Maths to 18' was the headline news from government but there's a lack of frustrating progress on more pressing areas of government education policy, says Julie McCulloch

The world of education policy has felt oddly stagnant over the last few months. That's mainly due to yet another 'refresh' at the DfE, with decisions piling up on ministers' desks as they get to grips with their new briefs, leading to a frustrating lack of progress in a number of areas.

They include the Government's plan for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It was finally published at the beginning of March, though whether it will also include the additional investment so desperately required remains to be seen.

Despite the general inertia, there has been change in some areas:

- The Autumn Statement – an additional £4.6 billion for schools over the next two years was announced. The sector lobbying on this issue, in which ASCL played a strong part – special credit goes to Funding Specialist Julia Harden – undoubtedly contributed to the Treasury's decision to stump up this extra money. It's not enough and the DfE is now spending it several times over as it claims it as the solution to all schools' financial woes but it's a great deal better than the alternative.
- The Schools Bill – a casualty of the ministerial merry-go-round, though few have mourned its demise. This poorly-written legislation was taking a well-deserved battering in the House of Lords before

the Government abandoned it. However, leaves some major issues unresolved, including the need to rationalise all the requirements and expectations under which academies currently operate. Recommendations from a review into this complex area are due soon.

- The Bill would also have brought in welcome changes, such as the introduction of a register of home-educated children, and increased powers for Ofsted to inspect illegal schools. The DfE now hopes to find a way to introduce legislation in these areas before the end of this Parliament, though time is short. ASCL will continue to lobby for these changes.
- Schools White Paper – while the Schools Bill may be dead, the White Paper that preceded it limps on. The government's ambition for all schools to be part of strong trusts remains, though there appears to be a welcome shift towards ensuring we build a robust system of highly effective trusts over time, rather than rushing towards an arbitrary deadline. Other high-profile proposals, including guidance on the '32.5 hour school week' appear to be stuck in policy limbo. ASCL has made clear that expecting schools to consult on and introduce changes to the length of their day or week for September 2023 is now ridiculous.

### What's next?

Realistically, there's a limit to what a government can try to achieve with a General Election on the horizon but it may still have some surprises up its sleeve.

The wild card of the last few weeks was the Prime Minister's announcement that he would like to see all young people studying maths to age 18. ASCL is unconvinced that this should be the highest current priority or that it is achievable without a rethink of post-16 education and given the dearth of maths teachers. We are having informal discussions with the DfE ahead of a likely formal consultation.

Finally, we're taking every opportunity to focus the government's mind on what we think should be its highest priority: the spiralling recruitment and retention crisis. Every time a minister or civil servant talks to us about a new idea, our first question is, "What assessment have you done on the likely impact of this on recruitment and retention?"

We can all come up with ideas for making education better. But without enough teachers, leaders and support staff, they're not going to happen. That's one constant that isn't going to change.



**Julie McCulloch**  
is ASCL Director  
of Policy





# GREAT OUTDOORS

## Festivals abound in the UK and are a great chance to enjoy music, food, steam engines and even bog-snorkelling in the fresh air

Summer – as the 13th-Century folk song has it – ‘is icumen in’ so it’s time to start thinking about spending some quality time in the open air at one or two of this country’s myriad fairs, fetes and festivals.

But don’t worry – this does not mean having to share a muddy tent, dubious food and troublesome toilets with midges . . .

There are superb days out on solid ground that cater for almost every interest, hobby and taste.

For example, experienced engineers, grease monkeys and train-spotters who find diesel locomotives a little too run-of-the-mill, should head to Daresbury near Warrington on July 8 and 9 for this year’s Cheshire Steam Fair.

Top attractions will include steam and stationary engines and vintage tractors, classic cars and motorbikes, trade stands and autojumble, ancient and modern funfair rides, arena entertainment plus food and drink.

As if all that’s not enough, the event will also star the West Lancs Dog Display Team and their famous fire jumps and the legendary Ken Fox’s death-defying Wall of Death in which motorcyclists try to scale the inside of a giant barrel with the help of centrifugal force. For details and ticket prices see <https://outdoorshows.co.uk/cheshire-steam-fair/>

### Viking raids

If military re-enactment is your bag, sharpen your battleaxe, polish your breast-plate and adjust your blunderbuss for a visit to the Whitby War Weekend (August 26-28) on land next to the famous abbey high up on the cliffs.

The event will recreate the sights, sounds and smells of warfare through the ages from 5th-century Viking raids to the muskets and bugles of the American Civil War and the air raids of the Second World War.

Wartime scenarios will feature in two arenas while living history displays will exhibit both genuine and replica equipment, weapons, military vehicles and uniforms.

Visitors can join in by having a go at axe throwing and archery or experiencing the discomfort of a ride in an armoured tank.





➤ There will also be live performances, a wide variety of catering, and singers showcasing music associated with all the historic skirmishes. Go to <https://outdoorshows.co.uk/whitby-war-weekend/>

If, on the other hand, you simply have to sample the festival buzz and enjoy a weekend's worth of live music, you are advised to head to the Latitude Festival at Henham Park in Suffolk (July 20-23).

It's a family-friendly affair with a relaxed vibe featuring music – star turns include the returning Pulp, Paolo Nutini and George Ezra – film screenings, comedy, poetry and literary readings, posh food and drink from around the world in a woodland setting with nearby lake.

It's like a big outdoor Waitrose where you can enjoy your wine and deli favourites, fresh air and middle-class fun without ruining your Birkenstocks. [www.latitudefestival.com](http://www.latitudefestival.com)



### Fancy dress

But, again, if your trip out isn't complete unless you end up head-to-toe in the mud, head for Llanwrtyd Wells in Wales on Sunday, August 27 for one of the dirtiest days out in the UK – and one of the country's strangest traditions: the World Bog Snorkelling Championships.

Everyone can enter – in fancy dress as well as snorkel and flippers, if possible. All you have to do is make your way through a dense, dark peat bog for 120 yards. No previous experience is necessary, apparently.

People come from all over the world to compete and wonder at the madness of the Brits at play.

Wait until they discover cheese rolling . . .

Pic credits: © Hawlfraint y Goron / © Crown copyright (2023) Cymru Wales



Image credits:  
Bog snorkelling – Hawlfraint y Goron / © Crown copyright (2023) Cymru Wales. Cheshire steam engines - credit: Phil Tugwell. Whitby War Weekend - AMHJP Photography

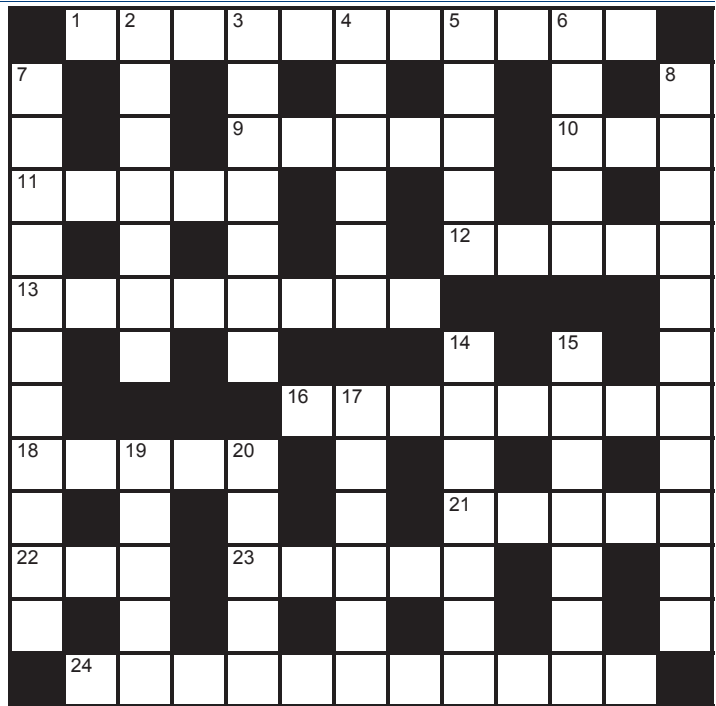
# PUZZLES

## Across

- 1 Founded (11)
- 9 Copy on thin paper (5)
- 10 \_\_\_ Baba (3)
- 11 Puts into order (5)
- 12 Exchanges for money (5)
- 13 Put to death (8)
- 16 Person's second self (5,3)
- 18 Elephant 'horns' (5)
- 21 Locations (5)
- 22 Floral garland (3)
- 23 Particular items (5)
- 24 Claimed back (11)

## Down

- 2 Mixed with a spoon (7)
- 3 Represents or performs as if in a play (4,3)
- 4 Association of sports teams (6)
- 5 Dance moves (5)
- 6 Electronic message (5)
- 7 With great urgency (11)
- 8 Child of an aunt or uncle (5,6)
- 14 Hot springs (7)
- 15 Point at which to retire for the night (7)
- 17 Tiers, layers (6)
- 19 Pig, hog (5)
- 20 Fight (3-2)



## S U D O K U

Place a number (from 1 to 9 inclusive) into each square in such a way that every digit appears once in each horizontal row, each vertical column and each box of nine squares.

		4		6	1	8	3	
	9		2					
7		1		3		5		4
9	4	5	6					1
3								8
1					4	2	5	6
6		7		8		9		5
					3		6	
	1	2	9	5		7		



# OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

**There are some truly delightful rail journeys through some of the most beautiful places in the UK and a Senior Railcard also makes them great value, says Pauline Thomas**

The Heart of Wales line runs between Swansea to Shrewsbury through dramatic scenery of mountains, forests, wild rivers, green meadows and pretty towns and villages across Shropshire, Powys, Carmarthenshire and the city and county of Swansea.

There are few roads in sight on this journey so the views can only be seen this way. There is a limited but regular train service along the line operated by Transport for Wales – a nationalised company unaffected by recent strikes – with comfortable new trains.

The views from the train are absolutely lovely but the service is busy in the school holidays. I recommend looking up quieter times on the TfW website, <https://tfw.wales/>

The Edinburgh to Aberdeen route runs along the East Coast of Scotland and through lovely countryside. Highlights include crossing the Forth Bridge and the spectacular views on the approach to Dundee.

Prices vary enormously and so does the comfort level so plan ahead and choose an off-peak time and an LNER train, [www.lner.co.uk/](http://www.lner.co.uk/)

The Belfast to Derry-Londonderry line passes through delightful countryside with the last part running along the coast. Arrival is interesting as the station is in Londonderry (NI) but you have to cross the river bridge or take a bus into Derry city (Republic of Ireland).

The crossing is known as the Peace Bridge and celebrates the unity of North and South of Ireland after the 30 years of the Troubles. Here you can spend a very interesting day in a city appreciating

peace for the last 25 years. Trains are regular and not too busy.

## Overnight sleeper

The South-West of England has some spectacular routes, particularly south of Plymouth. From Taunton down to Par is particularly interesting as the line runs so close to the sea that it has been closed from time to time in particularly windy weather.

The pretty part past Dawlish runs along the side of the beach and all of the scenery is lovely. Par is the stop for the Eden Project or you can continue down to Penzance.

There is an overnight sleeper with a dining car running from Paddington; you could return during the day to see the views, [www.gwr.com/travelling-with-us/night-riviera-sleeper](http://www.gwr.com/travelling-with-us/night-riviera-sleeper). For a shorter day trip, the route to Weymouth is very pretty and runs from Gloucester through Bristol.

Finally, a heritage line with steam trains runs regularly from Torquay to Kingswear, from where there is a connecting ferry service across the river to the beautiful Devon town of Dartmouth, [www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk](http://www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk)



Full steam ahead – the engine pulling the train on the Torquay-Kingswear line, Devon. Credit: Pauline Thomas

# BRISTOL AHOY

## Join the Associates' annual reunion in October



Bristol is the destination for the Associates' annual reunion on Wednesday 4 October and all members, family and friends are invited.

During the morning there will be a tour of Bristol Old Town, following the heritage trail and through the harbourside areas, led by Blue Badge guide Liz Gamblin.

After lunch at a harbourside restaurant there is a guided bus ride via Bristol Cathedral and up the steep hill, passing by the buildings, theatres and museums in the greater city area, historic Clifton

Village, the zoo, parks, alongside the River Avon, under Brunel's Suspension Bridge and back to the harbourside passing the SS Great Britain.

People able to extend their visit could visit Brunel's mighty ship ([www.ssgreatbritain.org](http://www.ssgreatbritain.org)) and the museum and other historical buildings seen on the guided tours.

Organiser Pat Sales said: "The Associates' Committee is delighted to offer the opportunity this year for members across the UK to meet together this year in historic Bristol for our popular

annual reunion and to catch up with friends and colleagues. Members who live in the south-west and Wales are especially welcome!"

Details and timings for the day's activities will be sent out in September together with the two-course lunch menu options for people to submit their choices in advance.

Complete the booking form and return it with payment to ASCL HQ as soon as possible and by 15 September.



### Booking form: Historic Bristol - Wednesday 4 October 2023

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

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

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

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

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

Special dietary/access requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

**Walking tour, lunch and bus tour:** (please indicate number of people attending) £55 per person

**Lunch and bus tour:** (please indicate number of people attending) £40 per person

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 Corporate Administration, (Associates' Bristol Reunion) at ASCL, 2nd Floor, Peat House, 1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP by **15 September 2023**.

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

For any queries regarding the reunion or to email your booking form please contact [corporateadmin@ascl.org.uk](mailto:corporateadmin@ascl.org.uk)

**Alternatively to book online visit [www.ascl.org.uk/reunion](http://www.ascl.org.uk/reunion)**

# FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

In the latest instalment of his history of ASCL and its predecessor associations, Richard Atterton documents how the challenges of the First World War changed our schools forever



Presidents of the Associations

YEAR	ASSOCIATION OF HEADMISTRESSES	HEADMASTERS ASSOCIATION
1914	Ethel Robertson – Christ’s Hospital	Sir John McClure – Mill Hill School
1915	Annie Escott – Sheffield High School	Rev Egerton Macarthy – 5 Ways School
1916		William Vaughan – Wellington College
1917	Reta Oldham – Streatham High School, London	Rev Wynne Edwards – Leeds Grammar
1918		William George Rushbrook – St Olave’s, York

Before the Great War, education in Britain was very different from today. It was not considered a priority for the majority of the population and was primarily reserved for the wealthy and privileged.

Primary education was patchy and many children did not attend school regularly. Even for those who did, the quality of education was often poor, with overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources and under-qualified teachers.

This meant that many children left school without basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Secondary education was available to a minority of children, primarily those from wealthier families.

However, even this was often limited in scope and did not

provide a broad-based education that we would recognise today. Instead, secondary education focused on classical languages and literature and vocational training for certain trades and professions. The school leaving age was 12!

## Policy and practice changes

The war and its aftermath led to significant changes in education policy and practice; the Headmasters’ Association and the Association of Headmistresses were influential throughout the war and important in the reorganisation of education after it.

‘The school leaving age was 12’

In January 1914, Sir John McClure, Headmaster of Mill Hill School and incoming President of the Headmasters’ Association, began the year with a degree of optimism and expressed the need for unity among the teaching profession.

Eight months later, he would announce: “With the outbreak of war, all educational progress depending upon legislation, and most of that which depends upon administrative action, was at once out of sight. We knew, indeed, already that the hope of a Government Education Bill was gone.”

In fact, a far wider-reaching Bill would be drafted and enacted by the end of the war.

## Serve in the military

By the end of that year the effect of



the war upon the staff of many schools had become serious. In schools where a large proportion of teachers were already eligible to serve in the military, the position has become critical.

The Headmasters' Association took the position that it would be better not to appoint to vacancies unmarried men of military age and, where circumstances permitted, to appoint women in the place of men teachers on active service.

A series of resolutions were moved by Sir John and carried without opposition. One ran:

"That this Association do consider the best means of reducing the expenses of school life, and that all its members pledge themselves to seize the opportunity of making simplicity of living a marked feature of English public schools."

Mr Malim (Haileybury) proposed:

"That, in the opinion of this Association, military training in secondary schools should as soon as possible be reorganised under the direction of the War Office."

By 1915, Rev Egerton MacCarthy, Headmaster of Five Ways School and President of the HMA, expressed concern about the future:

"Of all the activities which go to make up national life, none is so surely doomed to suffer in time of war as education."

His concern was fuelled by the loss of boys and the more 'vigorous of their masters'.

MacCarthy lamented that the British public had tended to view education as a mere luxury "and, wherever it is possible, to economise at the expense of the moral, physical, and mental needs of the coming generation."

In his presidential address, MacCarthy said that every great war in the modern world had been followed by changes in education. He noted Prussia in 1806 and France after 1870 and it would be "so in England after 1915."

### 'Unmerited calamities'

A number of resolutions were passed that year. Resolutions in the HMA were often passed unanimously. One such was the President's resolution expressing deep sympathy with the schools and colleges and people of Belgium in the 'unmerited calamities of the war'.

Speaking on education and the war, Sir John McClure, the retiring president, said the conflict might be called the 'professors' war', for the war spirit in Germany had been brought about largely through the influence of universities and schools.

Therefore, they were confronted with the fact that education was a far more potent force in politics than they had imagined.

### 'Military drill'

There then followed a much more divisive motion regarding "instruction on the elements of military drill and the use of the rifle forming part of the education of all boys in secondary schools."

This excited some opposition and an amendment was moved that the project was inopportune and contrary to the spirit and genius of free people.

Mr Paton, headmaster of Manchester Grammar School – himself educated in Germany for a time – had proposed as an addition to the resolution the words "if and so long as the Government calls upon secondary schools to undertake the work", remarking that they wanted not to abolish Germany but to menace

**'Members  
pledge to make  
simplicity of  
living a feature  
of English public  
schools'**

German militarism and did not want to establish militarism in Great Britain.

The original motion was eventually carried with 13 dissentients.

Annie Escott's presidential address at the 1915 Association of Headmistresses (AHM) conference forecast that:

"... the year 1917 would be a memorable one in the history of the world, and also in the history of education, as it would mark the approaching downfall of the most tyrannical brutal power that civilisation had ever known, memorable in history of education because they hoped and, indeed, had reason to believe that the hope would, be realised, that it would mark the start of an educational policy both comprehensive and enlightened."

That same year, Escott wrote to the British press to explain the steps the AHM had taken to help resolve many of the shortages in boys' schools and wider society.

"Sir —The Association of Headmistresses has had under consideration the report to the committee appointed by the Home Secretary to advise as to the employment of women in replacing men withdrawn for service in the military forces. The Association is anxious to assist as far as possible in finding suitable women to meet the present need, and has taken steps to ensure that this need shall be made known to former pupils of girls' public secondary schools throughout the country.

"In order to make the services of such women available, the Association has opened a war register, on which will be placed the names of women who are able to undertake clerical and other work for the duration of the war ..."

The first few years of the Great War had brought both despair and hope. In the next edition we will examine the later half of the war and the response of the headmasters and headmistresses to what would become known as the Fisher Act of 1918.

# MARK MY WORDS

## Andrew MacTavish recalls the rigmarole of recording results at his first school and wonders what future historians might make of all the information he compiled

"You'll need a mark book," said the old hand, pointing to a pile on the table.

"The first thing you've got to do is to list the names of your own form. Yours is 5R. And here's your timetable. I've copied it out for you from the Master Timetable in the corridor."

First day, first school, state grammar. Staff room full of milling gowns, greeting, collecting, checking, exercise books, boxes of chalk, urgency.

"Prayers in five minutes, gentlemen."

Into the hall. Headmaster in mortar board. Out into corridor, maelstrom. Find Room 12 and take a deep breath.

"Good morning, gentlemen," as the class of 14-year-olds sit down, looking at me with undisguised curiosity; I start my mark book with the first name, "Andrew".

I'm looking at it now. "ANDREW". Surname. Block capitals. No Christian (sic) names in the book. No boy had a first name. Nor did a number of very senior staff; the headmaster was Mr E.R. Tucker and, to this day, I do not know what the E.R. stood for.

Page by page, form by form, boys listed in my best writing along with the marks for every piece of their work. Neatness was critical as the figures had to be totalled at regular intervals for 'Fortnightly orders' and, ultimately, for the termly reports.

### Brutal mental addition

This called for brutal mental addition:  $12 + 5 + 17 + 12$  and then putting them in place order, or, worse, producing a percentage. Termly reports were on a single printed sheet, one for each boy in a folder in the staff room.

The space for one's comment was just short of microscopic. I composed them at home and wrote them here in the mark book in pencil to speed up my time at the staffroom table.

'He has worked well' and 'Steady progress but capable of better' was about all one could squash in.

The final sheet had to be a perfect work of art with no blots or errors; a crossing out would have been akin to a blasphemy and an error would mean the miscreant master had to take a new sheet round to everyone who had already made their comments and get them to rewrite them.

The names, the marks, the comments and some oddities such as '3/0d' opposite each name of my form. School fund? And did Boggs ever bring his subscription in?

The books the 4th Year (Year 9) were reading were *Huckleberry Finn*, *Silas Marner* and *My Early Life* by Churchill, who was still alive back then.

### Valuable record

Today's teachers might read all this with wide eyes.

"So, this was the record of everything you did, and you kept letters and notes in it?"

"It's all in ink!" and "You had to work out percentages from a total of 330 marks without a calculator?"

This mark book is as valuable a record of a past culture as was Champollion's Rosetta Stone or Rawlinson's cuneiform inscription at Behistun. It's pre-electronic and a work of art.

Could the monks in the scriptorium have taken more care taken in writing The Book of Kells? Its cover is faded and worn, but the names and columns of figures are as clear as the day they were written.

I know the school has a large archive cupboard and an archivist. I think I shall present it to him and, in future years, researchers will turn its pages with white gloves and cries of excitement.

But before I do, I shall check with Chris Andrew that he doesn't mind me using his name. By curious coincidence, he – the very first – is the one out of all the names with whom I am in touch and I am seeing him for a drink next week!

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

	E	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H	E	D		
D		T		C		E		T		M		F	
E		I		T	R	A	C	E		A	L	I	
S	O	R	T	S		G		P		I		R	
P		R		O		U		S	E	L	L	S	
E	X	E	C	U	T	E	D					T	
R		D		T				G		B		C	
A						A	L	T	E	R	E	G	O
T	U	S	K	S		E		Y		D		U	
E		W		E		V		S	I	T	E	S	
L	E	I		T	H	E	S	E		I		I	
Y		N		T		L		R		M		N	
	R	E	P	O	S	S	E	S	S	E	D		

### SUDOKU

2	5	4	7	6	1	8	3	9
8	9	3	2	4	5	6	1	7
7	6	1	8	3	9	5	2	4
9	4	5	6	2	8	3	7	1
3	2	6	5	1	7	4	9	8
1	7	8	3	9	4	2	5	6
6	3	7	1	8	2	9	4	5
5	8	9	4	7	3	1	6	2
4	1	2	9	5	6	7	8	3



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