

DECEMBER 2021

# The Old Felstedian



**The Diversity Issue**



Old Felstedian  
Society



# Old Felstedian Society

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Michael Yeatts (e76-81)

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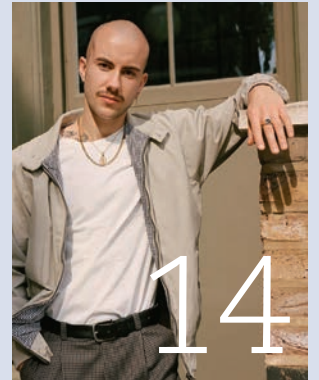
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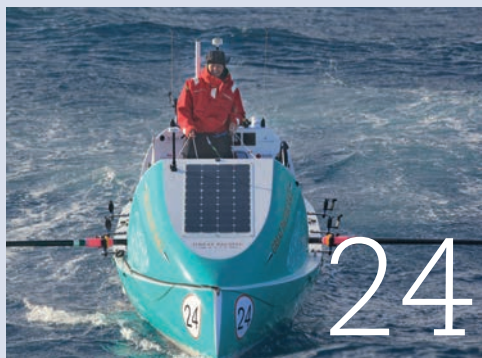
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## The Old Felstedian

December 2021 issue

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Visit the Old Felstedian website at:

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# Diversity and inclusion on the agenda both for school and OFs

**As we were putting this issue of *The Old Felstedian* to bed, the long dark shadow of the coronavirus pandemic had returned with the advent of the Omicron variant.**

As our freedoms are once again threatened, my thoughts go out to my OF friends who work in the worst affected sectors of the economy, such as healthcare, and the tourism, travel and hospitality sectors. I urge all OFs to remember these colleagues and support them in whatever way we can when we eventually beat this dreadful virus and life returns to full normality, which it will.

Meanwhile, we all remain on tenterhooks that the vaccines hold firm and our wall of

protection against serious disease remains intact so we can celebrate the festive break with our friends and family.

In this edition we have focused in some part on the issue of diversity. This is a thorny topic for independent schools - how can they have a truly diverse culture when there is such a high level of entry through one's ability to pay fees?

It is clear that despite this, Felsted is tackling the issue head on with the advent of its diversity and equality committee.

The headmaster Chris Townsend explains how this committee is helping develop a more inclusive and equal community for all Felstedians.

As Chris says, this is a long road and the school will meet many challenges on the way, but it is one that it is determined to meet. Change like this has to be driven from the top, and I have no doubt that Felsted's leadership will meet it.

We also speak with activist researcher Sam Moir-Smith, who transitioned from female to male while at Felsted and whose campaigning for trans rights continues to drive his future.

At *The Old Felstedian* we have continually sought to be more inclusive in terms of our coverage as we reach out to under-represented parts of the OF community. With such a broad church it is impossible for us to include everyone in each issue, but we are mindful to try and make each edition as representative as possible. This is a principle that we remain committed to and will continue to follow.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all OFs a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year... fingers crossed it will be as we all plan.

**James Garner (b85-90), Editor**

## UPDATE FROM THE OF PRESIDENT

*Sarah Macdiarmid (née Rowledge, m85-87) is halfway through her three-year term as president of the Old Felstedian Society. She talks to James Garner about her thoughts so far*

**It's been an interesting time to take the helm of the OF Society with Sarah's first 18 months in office being dominated by the coronavirus pandemic.**

"This summer, compared with last, has been like chalk and cheese," she said. "I've been to events at Felsted at least five times since the start of the summer and it's so good to feel the physical connection with the school again, the vibrancy and the excitement in the place is palpable."

She says she is thrilled that the university ambassadors programme has launched this year. The first event was attended by OF Society chair Michael Yeatts (e76-81) in Durham in November for OFs at the universities of Durham, Newcastle and Northumbria.

The ambassadorial programme for universities is designed to connect recent leavers with OFs already at the university, providing a familiar face, reassurance and assistance to freshers.

A second OF Society pub night event was held in Oxford at the end of November, again well attended and great fun!

Sarah hoped the scheme would facilitate the society to connect to alumni much earlier than it had in the past. "I'd like to see a two-pronged



Sarah at the 2020 Leavers' Dinner

approach, to include the time before the pupils leave the school when they are at the top end.

"I'm looking forward to talking about the OF Society and its benefits to sixth formers, so along with the university ambassadorial programme it will hopefully develop the connections with the OF Society earlier than in previous years."

Sarah added that she had promised her predecessor as president Brian Lott that she would take the ambassadorial

programme forward and is very excited that it is very much in motion now.

Her next aim is looking forward to re-invigorating the OF dinner, which will be taking place in spring 2022.

Details will be announced early in 2022, but nothing could be confirmed at the time of going to press.

The biennial event, which was last held in March 2020, just before the first lockdown was announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, might bookend the Covid-19 pandemic with organisers hopeful the 2022 event will be held at the end of the pandemic as life begins to return to normal. Let's hope so.

## Contributor

**Imogen Gander (fmm11-18)**

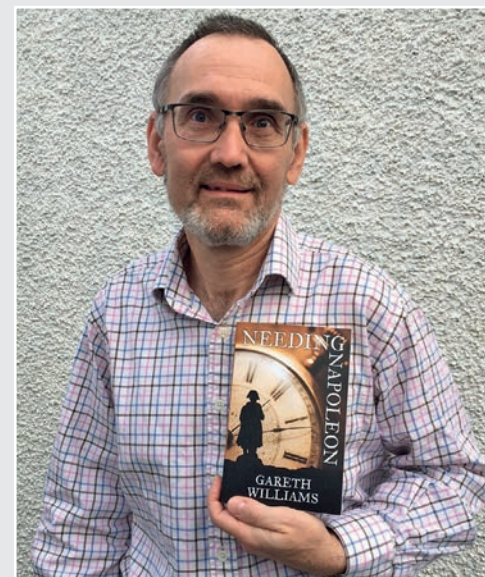
Imogen is studying for a master's degree in Classics at Girton College, Cambridge. When not completing essays, she enjoys writing magazine articles, and has written for the *Varsity*, and *Tab* student newspapers. Most of her mornings are spent at the river rowing for the college, with evenings often occupied by FemSoc discussions or attendance at the Cambridge Union.



# “noted & quoted” – a round up of OFs in the news

## Lockdown success for free-from bakery start-up

‘Knead a Little Love’ is a lockdown-born patisserie in London specialising in vegan doughnuts and other free-from baked goods run by OF Jess Stockell (fbn00-14) and her sister Becca Stockell (fbn05-10). Jess trained in patisserie at the world renowned culinary school, Le Cordon Bleu, and previously worked as a pastry chef in five-star hotels, before launching the business after she was furloughed. She started selling the homemade doughnuts from her bike in south London. Since then the business has grown enormously and the bakery will be opening in its new home in Aldgate from January 2022.



## Alecky Blythe’s new play at National Theatre

Playwright OF Alecky Blythe’s (m89-91) new play *Our Generation* opens at the National Theatre in London on 10 February and runs until 9 April 2022. Alecky follows the success of *London Road* with her new verbatim play that tells the stories of a generation of characters. Created from five years of interviews with 12 young people from across the UK, *Our Generation* is a captivating portrait of their journey into adulthood.



© OUR GENERATION (2021) Photography by Simon Sorted. Art direction and design by National Theatre Graphic Design Studio.

## Chris McLeod wins public health research fellowship

Dr Chris McLeod (fc00-08) has been awarded a prestigious Doctoral Prize fellowship at Loughborough University to support his research for the Centre for Lifestyle, Medicine and Behaviour. Chris will be leading various collaborative research programmes exploring how food choice and portion-size decisions across the lifespan can be manipulated to improve public health and reduce health-related disparities. Chris will also continue his role as the chair of the LGBT+ staff network at the university which aims to support LGBT+ staff and inclusivity initiatives.

## Historian publishes first novel *Needing Napoleon*

Dr Gareth Williams (fa74-83) has published his first novel *Needing Napoleon*, an alternate history set in the Napoleonic era. Gareth studied history at Cambridge University leading to a career as a history teacher. After Felsted, he played rugby for many years until a mountaineering fall forced him to retire at 48. He still proudly wears his Gepp’s house minor colours tie, won for *The Mile* house relay. Gareth now lives on the Isle of Skye with his wife Helen.

## Architect named in Forbes ‘Top 30 Under 30’

Architect OF Philip Goodman (fac02-09), who runs his own investment business, URECO Property, has been named in Forbes magazine’s top ‘30 Under 30’ for finance in Europe in 2021. Philip founded URECO in 2018 to improve the way people invest in property, offering ethical joint venture approach to investment. Since then, the firm has grown to a team of 20 and invested more than £10m. Forbes has recognised Philip as a leader in democratising flows of money around the world.





**Investment professional in Forbes top '30 Under 30'**

OF Lucas Kollmann (ac09-11) is an investment professional at global investment firm KKR and was selected for Forbes magazine's top '30 Under 30' for finance in Europe this year. Lucas, aged 28, is in charge of the company's TMT Growth Fund initiatives in the Germany, Austria and Switzerland (DACH) region. He started his career as one of the youngest investment professionals in the private equity industry in London, having had stints at Blackstone and General Atlantic, and is also a TEDx speaker.

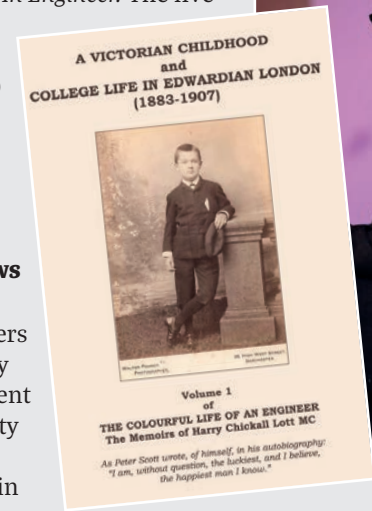
**Gus Burton wins British GT4 Championship**

Recent leaver Gus Burton (fec07-21) was crowned The Intelligent Money British GT4 champion. He won the title with his co-driver, Will Burns, following their win in an exciting finish to the second race in the rain at Oulton Park, Cheshire on 12 September.



**Brian Lott publishes father's memoirs**

OF Brian Lott OBE (a56-62) has published the remarkable memoirs of his father, Lt Col Harry C Lott MC, *The Colourful Life of An Engineer*. The five volumes covering the late 1800s to the 1930s provide a fascinating picture of life 100 years ago, with each volume covering a different place, period or subject.



**Hannah Palma awarded academic prize at St Andrews**

Hannah Palma (tn18-20) has been awarded the O E Saunders prize, which is given annually to the most outstanding student in Art History at the University of St Andrews. The prize is presented to the top student in the year group, with Hannah achieving a first class in both her semesters. "I am delighted that my consistent efforts and passion for the subject have been recognised formally by the university, particularly considering the difficulties faced in the ongoing circumstances which forced me to study remotely. I am grateful for the opportunity that this award presents and I am looking forward to my remaining time at St Andrews."



**Emma Jones helps Cambridge University Cricket Club to victory**

OF Emma Jones (gn15-20) scored an amazing 206 not out for Cambridge University in its match against Nottingham University earlier this year, with the team winning by 192 runs. Emma is currently reading Veterinary Medicine at Emmanuel College. She also plays cricket for the London-based South East Stars.

**Wisden awards Felsted second in the country**

The prestigious title of 'Wisden Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year' has been awarded to four OFs in the last century - the second largest cohort from any one school. Roger Luckin (1956), Derek Pringle (1977), Danny Pheloung (2005) and our most recent winner Ben Waring (2015) are all named in the latest edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.



**Naisha Polaine appointed director of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

OF Naisha Polaine (née Blake, m84-86) is the new managing director for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town development spanning Essex and Hertfordshire. Naisha is responsible for this major growth and regeneration project with associated infrastructure in and around Harlow. She will work alongside developers to ensure that 14,000 new homes are delivered in the garden town by 2033 and a further 7,000 in the years that follow.



# OF Announcements

## Births

Nadja Bauer (b04-05) and her husband Fabian welcomed their baby son Bo Constantin to the world on 4 October, a beautiful brother to Henri.



Elizabeth Koobarawa n02-07 (née McNeill-Walters) and Anil Koobarawa welcomed their son Arthur James McNeill Koobarawa on 9 September.



Joe Buttleman (fh97-05) and Lauren Nicoll welcomed Bobby Joseph Lewis Buttleman into the world on 24 May. He joins the family with their daughter Bonnie.



Joanne Curran (née Goodman, fb95-02) and Matthew Curran welcomed Loughlin Curran on 6 October, a beautiful little brother to sisters Evie and Jessica.



## Graduations

Vanessa Beale (gn13-18) graduated in international relations from Queen Mary University, whilst undertaking the roles of director and trustee of its students' union, National Union of Students delegate and senior course representative. She is now studying for a Master's degree in Political Economy of Europe at the London School of Economics.



Jackson Buckler (fdc11-18) graduated with a first class degree in music at the University of Southampton and was awarded the Hazel Muras-Osborn composition prize. He is a mixing and recording engineer, works in music production and is a freelance musician.



Fred Latham (fhc07-18) graduated with a first class degree in games art and design from Norwich University of the Arts.



Margherita Sbordoni (tn17-18) graduated from the University of Exeter in art history and visual culture. She is now studying for a graduate diploma in law.

Luke Bury (fhc04-18) graduated in sports and medical science from the University of Exeter and is now studying for a Master's degree in Sports and Exercise Medicine.



Stephenson College

Beth Hudson-Lund (fgn11-18) graduated with first class honours in biological sciences at Durham University.



Weddings

Holly Buttleman (fn97-07) and Jack Powell (fnc04-09) were married on 28 August at the Wilderness Reserve, Suffolk. Felsted friends helped to celebrate their special day including best man Sean Perrie, ushers Bertie Blackwell and Andrew Abbott, and bridesmaids Laura Abbott (née Feldman), Sophie Calvoceossi (née Avent), Hannah Marsden (née Evans), Chloe Metson and Izzy Reynolds.



Dilesh Patel (fa94-02) married Rupal Patel on 7 August in Newport on the Isle of Wight. His sister Pooja Patel and his three children were in attendance.



Vicki Hiatt (fgn02-09) married Will Carder on 21 July in Felsted School chapel, having had to reschedule the wedding four times due to Covid-19. The reception was at Barnston Lodge in Great Dunmow. Many OFs attended their special day including maid of honour Tasha Edmonds, bridesmaids Tanna Chamberlain and Steph Farr, best man Piers Reed, usher Rupert Bulgin, master of ceremonies Philip Goodman and William Hiatt who gave a reading.



Adedamola Ladipo (g95-00) married Opemipo Akinosun on 24 April in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. The couple are now living in Winnipeg, Canada.



Charlotte King (fb94-04) married James Hall on 10 September at 100 Barrington, Brixton in London. Felsted friends Emily Seymour-Taylor and Charlotte Nissen (née Belcher) helped to celebrate the special day.



Having begun their love story at Felsted in 2012, Katyana Rocker-Cook (gn11-13) and Sam McArdle (fdc99-13) were married on 14 August in the school chapel by Rev Nigel Little. Many OFs and former teachers were in attendance, including best man James Wilkinson, maid of honour Chiara Rocker-Cook, and bridal party members James Bryant, Jess Galvin, James McLeod, Harry Silcock and David Smith Valls.

# Inspirational bowel cancer campaigner loses battle

by James Garner

**OF Beth Purvis (née Walton, b93-95) lost her five-year battle against bowel cancer earlier this year, tragically passing away at the age of 42.**

Beth, who was known online as the 'Bowel Warrior' due to her campaigning work to raise awareness of this devastating condition, passed away on 26 June. She is survived by her husband Richard, her children Joseph, aged 13 and Abigail, 11, her three siblings OFs Laragh (b94-99), Ian (fc92-02) and Henry (fc94-07), and both her parents David and Shelagh. She was diagnosed with bowel cancer in September 2016 at the age of 37 after her GP had misdiagnosed her symptoms two years earlier as Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Within a year Beth's cancer had spread to her lungs and later it reached her brain.

After her diagnosis, Beth was incredibly passionate about raising awareness of the symptoms of bowel cancer in young people and pushing for earlier and better diagnosis. She featured frequently in Bowel Cancer UK's 'Never Too Young' campaign.

Her sister Laragh said that the family were incredibly proud of the way that Beth approached her cancer diagnosis and while coping with the illness, she also managed to dedicate herself to making memories with her family, finish a law degree and be committed to her campaigning work.

"It remains some consolation to us that her campaigning almost certainly saved a number of other families from the heartbreak that we have experienced."

She amassed a large online following as the Bowel Warrior and was able to use this to spread the message that you are never too young to have bowel cancer.

Her work has not gone unnoticed and in November she was awarded the Person of Courage Award at the Bishop's Stortford Independent Awards.

Beth made numerous media appearances with the BBC and others as well as articles in *The Daily Mail* and *The Sun*, and writing a regular column in her local newspaper.

Her focus was to raise awareness of bowel cancer amongst young people and encourage



*"Beth was driven by a desire to ensure that she saved others from her experience...."*

them to present their symptoms clearly to GPs in such a way that they do not have to suffer the missed opportunity of delayed diagnosis.

Beth worked with Bowel Cancer UK to develop a symptoms diary that was later promoted by the charity, supported by Coloplast and formally endorsed by the Royal College of GPs. It can be found on the charity's website.

In conjunction with knowing your symptoms this has been a key factor in helping GPs improve diagnosis.

When the diary was endorsed by the Royal College of GPs, Beth said: "I hope this symptoms diary will help to either rule out bowel cancer

or that a person will be diagnosed with the disease early when treatment has the best chance of working."

Writing in her local newspaper about living with stage 4 bowel cancer in January this year, Beth said: "Know your body. If something does not feel right then get it checked, and don't be fobbed off. Trust your gut."

Laragh added: "Beth was driven by a desire to ensure that she saved others from her experience. An example of the impact of Beth's campaigning was when a stranger walked up to her husband in a petrol station and asked if he was Rich Purvis, on confirmation of this the stranger simply said 'your wife saved my life'."

Beth's tragic and untimely journey with cancer involved courses of chemotherapy, a number of serious operations, a great amount of disappointment and the concern, and then acceptance, that she would not live to see her two children reach adulthood.

OFs who would like to support Beth's work in her memory can donate through the tribute page set up by her family by searching Beth Purvis on [muchloved.com](http://muchloved.com). All proceeds go to Bowel Cancer UK's 'Never Too Young' campaign.



*"...the stranger simply said 'your wife saved my life'..."*

## NEW ASCENSION CHURCH PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ROYAL DOCKS ACADEMY

by Selina Joslin

**The Garden Community Café in London's East End Custom House area launched a really successful hot meals project for pupils of the nearby Royal Docks Academy (RDA). The café, which is run by the Ascension Community Trust (ACT), has been providing a free hot evening meal once a week since October for up to 30 pupils. The café is open exclusively to them every day after 3pm, offering a safe space to enjoy a coffee and socialise with friends.**

Hannah Tulloch, chief executive of the ACT, explained: "We've been so pleased with the number of RDA pupils who are keen to volunteer in the café and have been assisting in the kitchen, making hot chocolates for friends, serving food and helping with washing up.

"This has led us to organise more volunteering opportunities the pupils can get involved with across our other community projects, including an after school club and the holiday schemes.

"We aim to work consistently with these wonderful young people with a particular focus on supporting their safety, wellbeing, motivation, education and future employability."

Links between Felsted School and the RDA have been further strengthened by the collaborative work between the ACT and Felsted through the school mission.

Since 2015, eight pupils have taken up full scholarships at Felsted School. As well as providing full bursary places, shared resources, joint INSET and pupil and staff exchanges, Felsted also provides scholarships for RDA pupils to attend Felsted's International Summer School and online courses.

Links between the Ascension Church and the Felsted School Mission have continued to grow and develop in recent years. The ACT works with the local community supporting young people, families and the elderly.

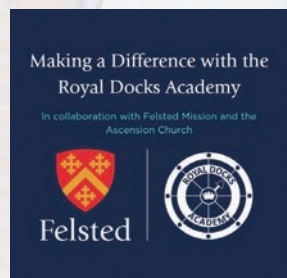
This partnership can be traced back to the mid-19th Century when the extreme poverty of this part of London's docklands was brought to the attention of the then headmaster.

This led to the founding of the Felsted School Mission and it was this funding which meant in 1887 a small brick and iron mission building was built on the site of the present Ascension Church.



Royal Docks Academy pupils visiting Felsted School

**"We've been so pleased with the number of Royal Docks Academy pupils who are keen to volunteer in the café..."**



[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) @MissionFelsted [ascensioncommunitytrust.org](http://ascensioncommunitytrust.org)

## Felsted welcomes new director of development

**Felsted has appointed a new director of development. Kate Love joined the school in September and will oversee the OF liaison and development team. She will be working with the OF Society to build alumni engagement, both social and professional, and focusing fundraising on transformational bursaries and other projects supporting Felsted's future.**



Kate's career began as a corporate PR consultant for an international firm. She then gained over 15 years' experience in development in the higher education sector with senior roles at both an Oxford and a Cambridge college, where she was also elected to the Fellowship.

Kate also led departments in two 'small and specialist' institutions, the Royal Agricultural University and Bath Spa University. In recent years, she ran her own boutique consultancy supporting a number of schools, colleges, universities, charities and charitable trusts.

She is passionate about the transformative power of education, having received significant support herself at the independent school where she is now a governor.

When Kate accepted the role at Felsted earlier this year she was living on the other side of the country, and joined over the summer months working remotely and using Zoom calls as the means of contact.

"I think all of us have experienced Zoom-fatigue over the last 18 months, which is why it was such a delight to arrive at the beginning of the new school year, as life was beginning to feel more normal again.

"And almost the first OFs I had the pleasure of meeting were those leavers from 2020 who had had the final months of their life at Felsted taken away so suddenly, when Covid first struck.

"Seeing so many of them, and their parents, return to school for a well-deserved and long-delayed celebration of their years at Felsted was a real honour.

"Felsted is a very warm and welcoming school, it commands great loyalty and affection and I'm looking forward to becoming part of the community, and building its fundraising to the level the school aspires to - and merits," Kate added.

# Felsted on the right road to developing a more diverse and inclusive culture

*Developing a culture of inclusivity and diversity at a modern independent school is not an easy challenge, but it is one that Headmaster Chris Townsend believes Felsted is living up to. He discusses the issue of diversity with James Garner*

As with many institutions, Felsted has had to look closely at itself and recognise that it needs to do more in order to be more diverse and inclusive.

“Whether that is the staff, pupil body, curriculum or just in our thinking,” says Headmaster Chris Townsend.

He says that the school has reviewed the way it manages induction for new pupils, recruits new staff, the images it uses to market itself, and the curriculum in the broadest sense, to make sure that it is encouraging diversity and ensuring that all pupils and staff are included fully in Felsted life.

“I have absolutely no doubt, however, that we are only a small way along this road,” he adds.

“The killing of George Floyd really shocked the world - and quite rightly so”, says Chris. He adds that the Black Lives Matter campaign that ensued and spread around the world has given the issue fresh impetus.

“The images from Bristol of the removal of the statue of Colston was a particularly powerful one,” says Chris, before reflecting again on the situation at Felsted.



*“We are committed to ensuring that the experience of every student and member of staff is the best that it can be...”*

“We know that in the past, pupils from minority backgrounds at the school have not always had a good experience, and even when this is the result of ‘micro-aggressions’ rather than outright hostility, it is, quite frankly, not good enough,” Chris adds.

When former pupil Dara Akomolafe (fbc06-18) posted a powerful message on his Instagram account that picked up hundreds of comments from former and current students, this provided new impetus for the school to do better.

Since then, Chris has engaged with Dara, first via Instagram, and then in person, and he is pleased that Dara supports the school’s equality and diversity committee and has contributed to the school’s educational programme.

“Many of the students are already fully understanding of the need not just to acknowledge diversity, but to celebrate differences, in a multi-cultural global community both in school and beyond.”

The equality and diversity committee is one of the key actions that the school has undertaken. It is made up of pupils, former pupils and staff, and has sought to drive change in the school.

It is a forum in which views can be aired, but it is also a vehicle for change and improvement. So far it has launched various initiatives, such as surveys of pupils and staff, Black History Month and a review of the curriculum and the displays around the school, in order to ensure that the environment is more representative of all in society.

“There is much work still to be done, of course, but I am hugely grateful to Rakesh Pathak, our head of history, who is chairing this



## “...being ‘woke’, as in being alive to the concerns and feelings of others, will be a crucial factor in being successful”

committee, and Rebecca Purdy, one of our assistant heads, who has led sessions for the staff on unconscious bias.

“I think that what is most important in this area, though, is that the school is not interested in improving its track record, which makes it sound like something that we have to do for someone else.

“We are committed to ensuring that the experience of every student and member of staff is the best that it can be, and that means that we must ensure that we celebrate diversity in all its forms, and ensure equality of opportunity.

*“Pupils are more prepared to call out what they see as inappropriate behaviours...”*

“This is also essential as part of the education for young people today, in order to prepare them for the world into which they will soon be going.”

On reflection, Chris wishes that the school had set up the committee before. “I do feel that we should have been tackling many of these issues sooner. But, it is not possible to change what has happened, and we must commit to doing better now.”

He says there will be time to reflect on its work in the future and assess whether the school has achieved the change it wants to.

“I suspect that there will be things that we will be pleased about, but there will still be more that we could be doing. Felsted is a proudly global community, and in that context, diversity really must be a strength for the school.

“Young people now are much more skilled in their engagement with political and social issues than previous generations and they are the ones who will make sure that change does happen.

“We could do more, but we are committed to doing what it takes to ensure that we see real progress.”

I ask Chris whether a selective independent school like Felsted can truly be a diverse and equal community.

“That is a very valid criticism of the world of independent schools,” he says. “How can you

be representative of society when you put such a high financial cost on entry to the school?”

“I do think that despite that, there are three ways in which diversity does thrive at Felsted,” he adds.

The first is that the school is a global community, of more than 30 different nationalities. “This provides a rich diversity of cultural experiences from which we can all learn.”

The second is that the Felsted community includes many students who are the first generation in their families to access independent education.

“This provides a social diversity within the community and demonstrates that independent schools do not have to be the enemy of social mobility, especially in a part of the country that is extremely entrepreneurial,” he adds.

The third is that the school is always looking at ways to provide life-changing bursaries to support young people who would otherwise be unable to access a Felsted education.

This is achieved through various ways, Chris adds. Generous support from OFs and current parents; through the school mission and its link with the Royal Docks Academy; through a partnership with the Royal Springboard Foundation; or through its own financial commitment to bursary funding. This all helps create a much more diverse pupil body to the benefit of all students.



“I would still like to see us support more young people to experience what I believe to be a very special education. Partly because it can change lives for them, but also because diversity within the school benefits all of our students and staff.”

A top down approach, is obviously necessary in the school, but I ask the headmaster whether the student body is fully engaged and aware of the issues?

“The vast majority are,” he says. “Some still have things to learn, so we do seek to educate, to inform and to challenge, and through this, we believe that we are creating the right culture and establishing the right values.

*“...diversity within the school benefits all of our students and staff”*

“Pupils are more prepared to call out what they see as inappropriate behaviours and we have used pupils to develop our charter for behaviour, which seeks to address any discriminatory or hostile behaviour.”



He admits it is challenging, for example social media can also be a magnet for more extreme viewpoints and this is something that the school has to be mindful of when working with young people.

Chris is also prepared to defend the school’s stance in the face of the anti-woke lobby, who believe this is political correctness gone mad.

“We are not educating young people for the world of 2010, but for the world of 2030, and to be successful in that not-so-distant future, being ‘woke’, as in being alive to the concerns and feelings of others, will be a crucial factor in being successful.”

He is also confident that the generation of young people currently at Felsted will leave a legacy of a more diverse, cultural understanding than any before it. “Then, the following group of students will surpass that,” he adds.

# Beaufrères highlight generational change at Felsted

Paul (c55-60) and Lucy Beaufrère (n85-87) compare their times at Felsted in the 1950s and the 1980s. James Garner edits their thoughts

**PAUL - what was it like when you joined the school in the mid-1950s?**

Without wishing to exaggerate, discipline and correct behaviour were priorities at Felsted in my era. Even by the time my daughter Lucy joined Garnetts in 1985, they weren't given the same importance.

It was a tougher regime back then. The cane was found in many classrooms and prefects' studies, and used in both, albeit sparingly and usually with full justification. Every day, whether summer or winter, started with a compulsory cold shower, supervised by a house prefect and boys addressed each other by their surnames and swimming was taken "in the buff".

I had an up-and-down relationship with authority in general and my ill-discipline seemed to disappoint my housemaster Fred Macrae, whose expectations were clearly at odds with the emerging pop culture of the time.

**What was it you liked about Felsted?**

Although discipline was my weak suit, there was much I enjoyed and gained from Felsted. Firstly, the teaching by an exceptional Common Room - and what must have been some heroic pleading by the school - was responsible for a conditional Oxbridge offer, which I subsequently declined.

I can credit Fred Macrae, who also taught me history, for instilling in me the romance of Victorian exploration in Africa and a long held desire to follow in the footsteps of Burton and Speke. Eventually, I realised this dream when I took a month's leave from the City in 1984 to travel the length of the Nile from Jinja (Uganda) to Cairo.



School Mission and subsequently joined the board of Ascension Community Trust.

Over a century on from its founding, the Mission remains a star in the Felsted firmament and continues to make a real difference to lives in a parish that is amongst the most disadvantaged in the country.

**Name something that you believe you gained by your experience at Felsted**

I owe Tony Beulah a debt for supporting the outrageous. He alone seconded my slightly tongue-in-cheek vote for *The Daily Mirror* as a house newspaper in a vote held by Windsor's middle room.

Since then, I have always been ready to think outside the box, a Felsted characteristic I see vividly in Lucy.

**How did Felsted shape you as a person?**

E H Lockwood taught me to love maths by bringing numerals to life - this was possibly the genesis of my City career in accountancy and finance. Although my choice of career paths is probably more down to Ian Law (c55-58), a contemporary in Windsor's, whose father was a chartered accountant, and finance director in a well-known London timber company. Ian's descriptions of their wealth and status proved a near irresistible attraction for an impressionable teenager with no other career plans.

**What do you regret?**

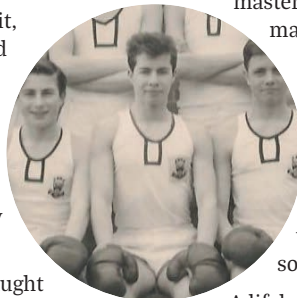
At 79, I have lost, or lost touch with most of my friends and contemporaries from Felsted days. Happily, an invitation in the 1990s from Gyles Cooper (fc52-60) a Windsor's study mate, led me to the committee of the Old Felstedian Society and then to the Mission, from where I have re-engaged with the school and with Felstedians of many generations.

I was given every encouragement in sport and restored relations with my housemaster when he was master in charge of boxing and unexpectedly made me captain.

Boxing was already declining in popularity amongst schools, to the point that some opponents had been lost. I remember in an effort to boost the fixture list, Felsted invited the Royal Grammar School Newcastle - one school that still engaged in the noble art - to a match and we were soundly beaten by a tough bunch of Geordies.

A lifelong love of shooting started on long summer afternoons spent on the Fingringhoe (Colchester) ranges and annual visits to Bisley to compete for the Ashburton Shield.

Rev Steele and Rev Ford introduced me to what was then named the Mission of the Ascension at the Victoria Dock. Some 40 years later I became treasurer of Felsted



**Above:** Paul Beaufrère with daughter Lucy and grandchildren Ellie and Sam Dinning  
**Insets:** Paul – captain of boxing, 1958. Windsor's rugby team, 1957  
**Below:** Windsor's, 1958 (Paul standing back row, fifth from left)



**What are your impressions of the school today?**

Returning to Felsted for the official opening of Follyfield House in 2015 opened my eyes to the scope and scale of development that has taken place.

Luxurious facilities at Follies contrasted with the Spartan desks and lockers in 1955's Windsor's junior room and the rows of iron-framed beds in the dormitories of School House.

The Lord Riche Hall, the music school, the new houses and sports facilities behind the chapel and alongside Prysties all took my breath away.

I conclude with a clear recollection of a 1955 visit to the school room in the old school building in the village, which left me with the conviction that "great Felsted oaks from little acorns do indeed grow".

**LUCY – What was it you liked about your time at Felsted?**

I remember my time at Felsted as being lots of fun. I was there for just two years as Felsted only had girls in the sixth form then, but as a landmark in my life, it seemed a lot longer and incredibly important.

Almost everyone was a full-boarder and even though my parents were a few miles away, they may as well have been in a different country. We were truly immersed in Felsted life.

The school was like walking through history – it had its own codes, its unique vocabulary and the weight of tradition all around. I had previously been at a small day school and couldn't wait to move on. Felsted was action-packed and offered a range of different activities.

Those first few days at school were terrifying – I remember walking into the cavernous, wood-panelled dining hall packed with boys and masters and silently repeating to myself "for God's sake, don't drop your tray."

I was lucky to have been put in Garnetts. We were a close-knit bunch and I made some lifelong friends there. We had a lovely matron, Frances Clark who oversaw the running of the house with kindness and traditional values. She was such a wonderful constant during my time there and is cherished to this day by everyone who stayed in Garnetts.

I took biology, chemistry and geography A levels. We were all encouraged to take an extra O level in our lower sixth year so I took art and architecture.

This meant I had many enjoyable hours in the art building in the old school house and being taught by

Trevor Goodman who was an inspiring art teacher. I had some excellent teachers including Common Room legend and joyful storyteller, Henry Maitland whose geography lessons were so entertaining. Tony Beaulah had been at the school during my father's time so there was this sense of familiarity with the school. I loved biology taught then by Michael Walker and went on to study zoology at Bristol University.

I lacked enthusiasm on the sports field but I made up for it in drama. We had a ball – thanks to the energy and drive of Martin Homer, there were lots of school plays to get involved with. The plays were quite adventurous, but we all took it seriously and with dedication.

In Stoppard's *After Magritte* I played the tuba (badly), wore a swimming cap and had to lie on an ironing board.

**Name something that you believe you gained by your experience at Felsted.**

There was always so much going on in the school calendar outside of the classroom. It felt great to be somewhere that valued genuine all-round education and not just exam grades. I was able to be bold, open-minded and it equipped me with a can-do approach to new things.

**How did Felsted shape you as a person?**

People say that Felsted runs through my veins. I met my husband Rob at the wedding of an OF and now we live in Felsted too. Our kids Ellie and Sam are at the school and are very happy.

After many years living and working a city life in London and New York, we decided to return to the countryside and we bought a house in the village. It was more by accident than design but having been at the school and the fact that my sister also lives here, it felt like a familiar and happy place to come back to.

My children might disagree, but I try to make a difference, a value that Felsted always emphasised. At school I used to visit an elderly resident of the Abbeyfield care home and I took part in a PHAB course (a nationwide charity that brings together groups of people with differing physical abilities for shared social and educational activities).

I now volunteer at Broomfield hospital as a help desk assistant, directing and escorting patients to their departments and locating wheelchairs.

**Below:** Garnetts House, 1987 – Lucy seated far right



**What are your impressions of the school's culture now as opposed to your time?**

As a former student and a parent I really marvel at the breadth of opportunities open to Felstedians now. For such a small rural place, Felsted has evolved into a much more outward-looking school.

The Round Square and the Model United Nations initiatives in particular are encouraging Felstedians to have big conversations about the world, the climate and about the benefits of diversity. Let's hope that Felstedians will be able to travel again soon to once more enjoy the full benefit of taking part in these schemes.

It has been a challenging time for everyone and I am so thankful that my parents have stayed healthy. There's no better time to take the opportunity to say how very proud I am of my dad. He has been very dedicated to the School Mission and has a real zest for life.



"It felt great to be somewhere that valued genuine all-round education..."

# Diversity campaigner takes activism to university research

*Sam Moir-Smith (mbc13-17) is a PhD student whose campaigning activism aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by transgender people. Here he explains to Imogen Gander what it means to be an activist researcher*

**OF Sam Moir-Smith is a trans man involved in campaigning for trans rights, whose activism continues to drive his future.**

Sam bravely documented his journey from female to male through social media and worked with brands such as Nike during his time at Felsted. This included a Nike documentary, filmed to raise awareness around the challenges faced by transgender people, such as the appropriate language to be used and the long waiting times for gender-affirming procedures involved with transitioning.

Since leaving Felsted, Sam has built upon his activism and pursued an academic career raising awareness around the barriers trans people can face within society.

He has completed an undergraduate and master's degree at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL). Recently, he has embarked upon a PhD in Human Geography, investigating the interrelationship between health, biopolitics and social inequality, particularly in the context of investigating medical literature on trans people, and what medical students are being taught about trans-specific healthcare.

*“...education about trans lives should be accessible to all in society...”*

I was keen to hear how Sam's personal interests have led his research, learning that one of his key aims is to give a voice to trans people who are normally spoken for.

He has conducted intimate interviews with dozens of trans people, many of whom he met through social media and online communities, to gain a wider perspective on



the access to healthcare for young trans people in the UK.

Sam says he has always had a strong sense of social justice and believes that much of this comes from recognition of his own privilege. He credits Felsted for making his transition less challenging, stating that he felt accepted and accommodated at the school in a way that he does not think he would have been elsewhere.

He adds that he is privileged in other ways. I was shocked to hear that he was in the minority of trans teenagers able to receive hormone replacement therapy, as current NHS waiting lists can mean that young people do not receive the medical care they require until up to eight years after their initial GP consultations.

The long waits are something that Sam wishes to explore further in the development of his master's thesis after completing his PhD.

Delays in treatment times mean that often, transgender individuals may understand and experience time differently to cisgender people (people who identify with their sex at birth), and this can have a significant impact on their ability to live in the present and construct their futures.

Through his research career, Sam has focused his attention on academic activism, describing himself as an “activist researcher”.

By speaking to other trans individuals, who may not have been so fortunate in their transition, or as accepted by their community, Sam hopes to explore these personal stories within academic research to spread awareness of a multitude of trans experiences.

*“...there is still a long way to go in breaking down stereotypes about who trans people should be...”*

Over the course of our conversation, I am struck by how passionate Sam is about creating awareness around issues faced by the trans community, and it is clear that he believes that education about trans lives should be accessible to all in society.

In addition to his studies, Sam carries his activism into the fashion industry, often being involved in campaigns during Pride Month. He says that even in this sector, there is still a long way to go in breaking down stereotypes about who trans people should be, and what they should look like.

Fortunately, Sam is able to directly help change this perception by delivering a master's module in gender, sexuality and health as a teaching associate at QMUL.

He recently spoke to an international group of students at the Felsted Summer School, noting how many students acknowledged the differences in how trans people were treated in their own countries compared with Sam's own experience of transitioning in the UK.

Much of this work directly relates to what Sam hopes to do in the future. His ambition is to continue to spread awareness of trans stories and experiences across different platforms, citing a desire to act as a consultant for news

and radio, as well as wanting to share his own research, perhaps by writing a book.

I was shocked to hear how frequently news stories about trans issues are researched and presented entirely by cisgender individuals. Sam tells me that in one particular year, *The Times* ran approximately 300 articles related to transgender rights and issues, and not a single one of them was written by a trans person who would have been able to contribute their own experience to help write the story.

In terms of his future research, Sam hopes to look at the differences between American and British healthcare for trans people, especially regarding issues such as affording surgery through insurance plans.

He notes that little research has been done to improve surgical techniques over the past few decades and cites significant income inequality as being an issue in America, just as it is here.

The topic of income inequality led us onto a discussion about the wider issue of diversity within our society and that this is often one of the biggest barriers to creating environments, such as independent schools, that appear to be diverse.

Coming from Felsted, Sam was surprised to find himself in a cohort of over 50% BAME undergraduates at QMUL and told me how much he loved the experience of being in an environment where everyone around him had such unique and diverse life experiences.

He noted that the teaching staff were also from all over the world and that this was actually one of the reasons that led to his specialisation in an area of social inequality.

This contrasted with my own university experience and made me reflect on the value of interacting with a wide spectrum of people. Sam notes how such understanding can help make the world a better place for all marginalised groups within society.

Sam believes that seeing more diverse faces in the media and positions of power is an important way to create a society that is more accepting and more inclusive of all types of people.

This is still something that requires progress as representation often causes a backlash, across the political spectrum.

Despite this clear sign that there is still significant work to be done, Sam did note that

there have been positive legal shifts towards the improvement of trans rights in the UK, such as through the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.

We discussed how such legislation and activism not only helps trans people, but everyone in our community.

As OFs, Sam and I chatted about our time at school, and how Felsted has tried to introduce teaching about diversity to students.

Sam says he felt lucky in his year group, although he was the only trans person, he had several LGBT friends and told me that he did not feel unsupported in any way. He notes how good Felsted is at fostering a community environment, and that this for him, removed the potential need to interact with people just like him at school.

Sam is also grateful that he was well supported during his transition at school. He was nervous as to how he would be accepted, but found Felsted to be amazingly caring and keen to listen to him for suggestions about how to make his transition easier.

.....  
*“Felsted is setting an excellent example for independent schools in increasing the diversity of its student population in all aspects..”*  
 .....

He also credits Felsted for teaching him how to build relationships and live with other people, something that made the move to university far easier than it would probably have been had he stayed at the state school he was at before Year 10.

We agreed that Felsted is setting an excellent example for independent schools in increasing the diversity of its student population in all aspects.

The provision of bursaries and outreach programmes for students from schools in disadvantaged areas helps to ensure that pupils represent a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, something that certainly helps to enrich the classroom environment.

Further, the provision of BTECs and a wider selection of A Levels in recent years has helped to ensure that students across different academic levels feel supported.

Sam says he has returned to Felsted since leaving to do sessions with Years 10 and 12 students about broadening their horizons and praises the introduction of global studies lessons.

One thing that is clearly important to Sam is the teaching of age-appropriate information to help children appreciate that there is more diversity to the world than they might immediately notice.

He believes that by introducing these ideas to the young, we might be able to create a more understanding and globally-conscious future.



## HISTORY SHOWS PROGRESS CAN BE SLOW BUT PATHAK THINKS FELSTED IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK

*Felsted's Head of History and Politics Rakesh Pathak is also chair of its new diversity and equality committee. He tells James Garner more about this committee and his time at the school*

### **Rakesh, you've been teaching at Felsted for 15 years now – how has the school changed in that time?**

In some ways, not much at all. As one might expect in a school with such deep roots in the past, there are lots of traditions that remain unchanged.

The House Shout – although it has been curtailed somewhat due to the pandemic – the main school production in the autumn term, prefects' blue gowns, the Upjohn Declamation, cricket on The Front and singing along to Mariah Carey at the Christmas dinner all remain much cherished parts of Felsted's culture.

Nevertheless, some changes are inevitable and indeed healthy. In particular, I would say that the school is more outward-looking and 'global' than was perhaps the case 15 years ago.

### **What have been the highlights of your time at the school?**

I've been lucky enough to work alongside some great colleagues and students and, on a good day when everything is going well, it can feel like the best job in the world and an absolute privilege.

Personal highlights would involve school trips to the Normandy and Ypres battlefields or alternatively, sunny days pontificating on some of my favourite niche aspects of history in the Reekie building, my home-from-home for the last 15 years.



Several years ago, I also did a 'Bollywood' dance in the Lord Riche Hall for the Magic Bus charity, featuring some of my signature and never-to-be-repeated dance moves – it was tremendous fun. Students of a certain age may also remember my raps covering key events in British history from 1642-1702, but now that I am over 40, I have retired as a hip-hop artist.

### **You're head of history and politics at Felsted – history is such a great subject but how do you keep it fresh and exciting?**

Along with my standard piece of start-of-year advice (aim for an A\* in life), I tell pupils to expect me to be passionate about my subject.

I hope I convey this sense of intellectual excitement to my students.

One of the things that has really helped me avoid getting stale is to try and keep up with my own wider reading and this can help me pass on some new 'golden nuggets' of learning or even to re-evaluate how I previously approached a topic. For example, I have recently read an article on early 17th-Century parliaments which has made me re-assess what I thought I knew about the House of Lords in this period.

In recent years, I have also started to teach new topics such as the Mughal Empire which has given me a great excuse to go away and read more history books.

Our next project is the introduction of a new GCSE module on migration to Britain from circa 800 up to the present day, which we are really looking forward to teaching.

### **And politics? For older OFs like me politics was not on the curriculum, when was it introduced to Felsted and has it been a valuable addition?**

We introduced politics as an A Level in 2013 and as a subject it has gone from strength to strength. It is now one of the most popular A Levels and over the last few years, many Felstedians have gone on to study politics and international relations at university.

Given the changes brought about by the financial crisis, Brexit and the election of Donald Trump in the US, there has probably





never been a more important time to study politics.

Studying politics as an academic subject has, in my opinion, helped students understand more about the turbulent times they are living through. With politics on the curriculum, we have also been able to run more mock elections, and my colleague Lou Scofield also led a successful trip to Washington DC.

**In the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter campaign Felsted set up an equality and diversity committee, to examine how it can do better in this area. Tell us more about it.**

The committee currently consists of about 30 pupils from all houses, as well as teachers, OFs and staff. It is quite important to stress that we are not just a group for black and minority ethnic students, but we are open to anybody interested in making Felsted a more welcoming community or simply wanting to educate themselves on these issues.

We meet every Tuesday breaktime and on a week-to-week basis, our work might involve listening to each other's experiences and trying to be a safe space where students can share thoughts and feelings.

We started meeting in the summer of 2020 and having conducted a survey of over 100 students and staff, which identified a number of issues that we could address, relating to making Felsted a more genuinely inclusive institution. To try and make this aspiration a reality we have made a video setting out our ethos run numerous assemblies, and organised competitions for Black History month.

Thanks to the artistic talents of one of our students, Marlene M, we now have our own badge and logo and our next goal is to run an evening event for students in the Easter term, as an opportunity to 'dig deeper' into these issues.

I should add that we are very grateful to OF Dara Akomolafe (fd06-18) whose wisdom and advice has been instrumental to the work of the committee over the last year.

**It's an incredibly important area – how's Felsted doing and could it be doing better?**

I think compared with a lot of schools, we are doing well but there is no room for complacency. As a teacher I do sometimes worry about what might be said and done when there is no adult present. The real challenge is to try and create a genuinely inclusive culture which is not top-down but instead is embraced enthusiastically by all members of the community.

We are not there yet but I think that we now have some of the mechanisms and systems in place to confront issues of racism and discrimination more effectively than might have been the case a few years ago.

**This is a thorny question but can a selective independent school like Felsted really be a truly diverse and equal community?**

That's a good question. Lots of people at Felsted still talk about the 'Felsted bubble' which has connotations of a slightly insular way of looking at the world.

I think this is starting to change and the school is certainly much more engaged with outreach projects in the local and international community than when I joined Felsted in 2006. It is also worth noting that our student body is not homogeneous but increasingly global and diverse and thus, embracing inclusivity and equality is in the school's own best interests. It is also the right moral choice and helps equip students for the challenges they will face when they leave Felsted.

**What qualifies you to be chair of this committee. Have you any particular experiences with diversity and equality that you can draw on that have helped?**

I don't have any formal qualifications, apart from a personal interest in the topic and a reasonable historical grasp of some of the issues involved. So, I see my role as more of a mentor, advisor and facilitator than a leader

telling everyone what to do, although the students may disagree.

At times, growing up in a mixed race family in the Britain of the 1980s had its challenges and hopefully, this equips me with the ability to empathise with today's students who may be trying to navigate their way through some of the same issues that I faced a few decades ago.

**Do you see a world where the issues of diversity and equality are no more?**

As a country, we have come a long way since the 1980s but I think there is a much still to be done. The current crisis in English cricket illustrates the danger of complacency and assuming that equality and inclusion is just a question, metaphorically, of 'ticking some boxes' and then carrying on regardless as if nothing needs to change.

Another danger is that the growing toxicity of our political culture will seep into schools, creating an 'us and them' mentality, when what we are striving to create at Felsted is a genuinely inclusive community.

Knowing too much about history can make you a pessimist about human nature but it is always worth bearing in mind Martin Luther King's words: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

In other words, positive change can be painfully slow but it does happen.

**“We are not there yet but I think that we now have some of the mechanisms and systems in place to confront issues of racism and discrimination more effectively than might have been the case a few years ago...”**

# FACES AND PLACES

## LEAVERS' DINNER FOR CLASS OF 2020

On 27 August, 168 guests returned for the 2020 Leavers' Dinner in the Lord Riche Hall at Felsted School for a much-anticipated black tie celebration. Over half of the year group attended, many with their parents, and enjoyed a three-course meal and live entertainment. OF Society President Sarah Macdiarmid (née Rowledge, m85-87) officially welcomed the leavers and spoke to them of the many opportunities available within the wider OF community.



## CELEBRATION OF JOHN COCKETT'S LIFE

On 10 September over 200 guests gathered together to celebrate former Felsted teacher John Cockett's life at a service of thanksgiving in the school chapel, with many friends also watching the service online. This was followed by light refreshments and a special memorial cricket match between Felsted Robins CC and Felsted 1st XI. John taught at Felsted from 1951 to 1989.



## 'TEMPUS FUGIT' GATHERING AT WIMBLEDON

Time does indeed fly and after a postponement of 18 months, it was a pleasure to welcome OFs and well-wishers for a lunch at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC) in London on 29 September. Over 30 people, largely pupils from the 50s and 60s, were hosted by OFs and AELTC members Barry Weatherill CBE (c52-56) and Sir Marcus Setchell KCVO (c57-61).



**NETBALL TOURNAMENT CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CO-EDUCATION**

The inaugural OF netball tournament took place on 25 September launched to honour Felsted's 50 years of co-education celebrated in 2020. It was fantastic to watch three OF teams and a team of current Felsted parents battling it out in a series of highly competitive matches. Afterwards, guests enjoyed a BBQ lunch in the school's Bathurst Garden where Irene Duffy, former England netball coach from 1979-1984 presented OF Amy Tydeman (fbn09-17), captain of the winning team with the winners' trophy.



**CAMBRIDGE SUMMER GARDEN PARTY**

On 8 July, 30 guests enjoyed the Cambridge Network summer drinks party in the beautiful Fellows' Gardens at Jesus College, Cambridge, with grateful thanks to OF Nicholas Ray (g60-65) for hosting the evening.



**WINTER LUNCH AT JESUS COLLEGE**

After a two-year hiatus, the Cambridge Network winter lunch returned to Jesus College on 25 November. It was a real pleasure to welcome 20 guests along for a delicious meal in the college tradition and hear about university life from undergraduates at Cambridge.



**DR SOPHIE BOSTOCK'S LECTURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP**

Sleep scientist Dr Sophie Bostock (n97-99) delivered Felsted's Virtual Cromwell Lecture about the *Power of Sleep* to pupils and OFs dialling in from around the world on 25 May. Sophie's key message was that proper sleep is an essential way of helping our bodies and brains to function at their best for as many years as possible. Sophie is also an adventure enthusiast and rowed around Great Britain to raise over £8,000 for the British Heart Foundation over the summer.



**ALUMNI POLO MATCH AT SILVER LEYS**

The annual Old Felstedians v Old Stortfordians polo match returned to Silver Leys Polo Club in Little Hadham on 4 July. Both talented teams fought hard in a close match, with Old Stortfordians emerging as the winners with a final score of 8-7. Many thanks to our supporters and the Felsted team: Grant Polkinghorne (hc08-13), Claudia Seers (fmm01-15), Alex Rayner and Will Hopkins (ac09-11).

**OF PUB NIGHT IN NORTH EAST**

OF university ambassador Peter Hipkin (fhc12-19) hosted drinks at The Boat Club in Durham on 22 November for those at Durham, Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, with support on the night from OF Society Chair Michael Yeatts (e76-81).

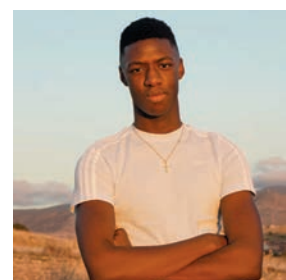
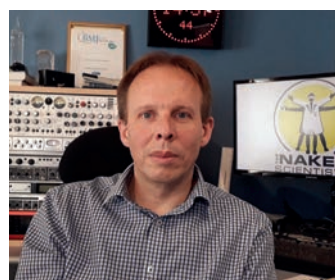


**OXFORD PUB NIGHT**

OF drinks hosted by university ambassadors Taffy Gumbo (bn17-19) and Hannah Slater (fmm11-19), both undergraduates at Oxford Brookes University, took place at The Angel and Greyhound in Oxford on 30 November.

**FELSTED TALKS PODCAST SERIES**

Looking for an entertaining listen? Then try downloading or streaming any of the school's FelsTED Talks podcast series featuring various members of the community, including many OFs, such as Dr Chris Smith (fg83-91) (bottom left), Dara Akomolafe (fd06-18) (bottom right), Arata Otake (b99-03) (bottom centre) and current Felsted parents Victor Chandler and author Jojo Moyes. Tune in to discover what has had the biggest impacts on the interviewee's development as characters and how each has made a difference to the world around them. You can listen to series one and two via Apple Podcasts or Spotify.





**We sadly report the following deaths notified to us in 2021**

- BACON, Roger James Godfray (fd51-60)
- BIRD, David Richard Anthony (fh60-69)
- BIRD, Robert Harcourt (e48-53)
- CHAPPELL, Herbert Frank (e54-58)
- CICLITIRA, Andrew Gordon (e73-78)
- DAVIS, Christopher Philip (c54-57)
- DECKER, Peter Randolph (b52-53)
- DIXON, Richard Howie (a52-56)
- DUNKLEY, Robert William (fd48-57)
- EDWARDS, Richard Grant (e60-65)
- GRIGGS, Ben Alexander Jack (h08-12)
- HAMILTON, Ian Michael (d64-68)
- HOOK, Anthony James (a69-72)
- JACKSON, Anthony John CBE OBE (fa42-50)
- KENNY, Jasmine Ella (fgn14-21)
- KOPELMAN, Prof Peter Graham (c64-69)
- LAVERTY, John Patrick (a57-59)
- LAWRENCE, Paul Henry Weston (d54-58)
- LEACH, Paul Beaumont (fc38-46)
- LEAMAN, Howard Westcott JP (c47-52)
- METSON, Captain Anthony Richard (fch56-65)
- MORLEY-BROWN, Alastair (fc44-52)
- PURVIS (née WALTON), Bethany (b93-95)
- PITTEWAY, Prof Michael Lloyd Victor (g47-52)
- RAWLINSON, Dr Peter Marshall OBE, TD (a70-75)
- REES, John Louis (g41-46)
- RYLAND, Paul Marcus (c56-59)
- SOUTHGATE, Anthony Charles (fd41-45)
- STEWART, Andrew Marshall (fe60-67)
- TEMPLE McCUNE, Alexander James (dc11-13)
- TOMLINSON, Christopher *Timothy* (b61-65)
- WEIR, John Francis Frederick MBE (c44-48)
- WILLIAMS, Michael Verry (fd42-52)
- WITHAM, John Connery (f44-49)
- WRIGHT, John Bentley (d46-51)

**Former Staff**

- ARCHER, Peta (89-00)
- BAUMBACK, Bill (07-15)
- BIRD, Albert (64-99)
- CRAVEN, Frank *Michael* (55-91)
- ELWIN, Charles (78-96)
- GUEST, Harry (55-61)
- LERWILL, Alan (76-96)
- WALL, Jean (72-18)

**Former Governors**

- CHILDS, Alistair (Clerk to the Governors)
- LEE, Peter Gavin DL

Please visit [felsted.org/ofs/obituaries](http://felsted.org/ofs/obituaries) for more information.

**OBITUARIES**

# RACEHORSE ENTHUSIAST AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSMAN STEWART DIES AFTER FALL

**Andy Stewart (fe60-67) died peacefully in a Guernsey hospital on 10 September, 2021 due to health complications following a fall at his Barbados home.**



He will be sorely missed, particularly by the sport of jump racing, which he had been heavily involved in for the past 20 years.

Andy was born in Romford, Essex on 15 August, 1951 to doctor parents. He went to Felsted School in 1960 where he was expelled at the age of 16, a fact he was not ashamed

of at all. His CV notoriously began: “1967; expelled from school”.

In an interview with *The Old Felstedian* in 2006, he couldn’t remember the reason for his early exit. He had previously told *The Times*: “I’m not really sure what happened,” he said. “Too many trips to the local races... I can’t remember.”

However, despite his early departure, he was a supporter of the school in later life, giving generously, a fact which was recognised by having the new Stewart building in the prep school named after him in 2012.

His healthy disregard for the establishment continued throughout his career. He started in the City as a trainee gilt trader with banking firm Simon & Coates, which he described as very old school.

“We worked with all these hunting, fishing, shooting types that skipped Monday and Friday and lunched in between.”

The partners used to get rich despite the fact that they weren’t doing anything. Once he was established, a group of his younger colleagues challenged the relationship at the firm and became partners.

In 1991, he formed Collins Stewart with his friend Leigh Collins. He left the firm in 2003 and launched brokerage firm Cenkos Securities in 2004, which he floated on AIM, the alternative investment market, in October 2006. The shares started the day at 140p a share and ended its first day’s trading at 201.5p, valuing the firm at £146m.

Outside the City, Andy cemented his love affair with jump racing in 1997 when he bought his first horse, Cenkos, that went on to win the Tingle Creek Chase at Sandown in 2002.

He had several other notable winners, the most famous was Big Bucks that won the World (Stayers’) Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival four years in succession in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

He had a great relationship with his 12 times National Hunt Champion trainer Paul Nicholls. Paying tribute to Andy, Paul told the Racing Post: “It’s awfully sad. I knew he’d been poorly since he had that fall in Barbados, and he’s just not got over it.

“I’ve known him for the best part of 20 years, and I reckon we spoke to each other and were in contact nearly every day in that 20 years.

“We had many memories, but Big Bucks’ fourth win in the Stayers’ was an amazing day.”

Andy also helped raise thousands of pounds for Spinal Research, a charity close to his heart after his son Paul broke his back while snowboarding in the Alps in 2008.

## JASMINE ELLA KENNY 2002-2021

**Jasmine Ella Kenny (fgn14-21) has suddenly passed away having only just started her university studies.**

Jasmine’s sudden death left Felsted and its wider community devastated and saddened to have lost such a genuine and kind young woman.

She was a wonderful artist, a fantastic goalkeeper in hockey, a committed warrant officer in the Combined Cadet Force, an excellent school prefect and an inspirational young woman. She was also a former pupil of Felsted prep school and member of Garnetts and Follyfield.

Jasmine had just started a course in English literature and creative writing at Exeter University. She had already been awarded an army scholarship to attend the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, once she had completed her degree.

A week before she died, she had successfully completed a fitness test for the Army, and was focused on making a real success of her future career.

Headmaster Chris Townsend said: “Knowing Jasmine, there is no doubt in my mind that she could have gone to the very highest ranks, and would have served those under her command with the utmost diligence and care. “Our thoughts and prayers as a community are with her parents, Richard and Alison, and her sister Poppy.”



# Felsted loses first PE teacher and outstanding athletics coach

**Alan Lerwill passed away peacefully on 6 February, 2021 with his family, Sue, Ben and Tom at his side.**

He will long be remembered by many OFs as an excellent athletics coach and PE teacher. He was jointly appointed as the school's first PE teacher in 1976 alongside his long-standing colleague and friend Alisdair Thomson.



As well as an athletics coach, he was also housemaster of Manor (1985-88) and Stocks's (1988-89) and both his sons Ben (fa83-93) and Tom (fa85-95) were pupils at the school.

Alisdair Thomson (1976-2015) remembers their joint appointment by Headmaster Tony Eggleston as an innovative move. "The Common Room was only 38 strong, five of whom were Classicists, and included only one female teacher who taught English. So employing two young PE teachers was quite a revolution," he added.

"At the time there was no National Curriculum and Alan and I were able to develop our own curriculum bringing in health-related exercise and 'The Mile' as key components. All this was delivered in the Hunt Theatre, the then gymnasium."

They inherited equipment consisting of an old tea chest full of split boxing gloves, three iron bars and associated rusty weights. "Oh, and there were about four ropes hanging from the beams in the gym," he added.

"We were required to teach one curriculum lesson of PE per week to every pupil in both the prep and senior schools. In 1976 there was even a seventh term in the sixth form for Oxbridge pupils and we had to provide a handwritten report for every single pupil each term, fortunately Alan was a literary fellow."

Alan also coached U14 rugby and formed a great partnership with Tom Pockley. "Many a Felstedian learnt the basics of the great game from these two gentlemen," Alisdair added.

Athletics at Felsted was an incredibly strong summer sport for the 20 years Alan was at Felsted until he moved to Millfield School.

"Alan's legacy is really huge and led to a strong PE department full of good people that the school now benefits from."

He will be best known for his athletics, having competed at the Olympics in 1968 and 1972 in the long and triple jumps. He won a gold medal at the



Alan Lerwill (far left) at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club in 1988

Commonwealth Games long jump in 1974. At one point he was also the British high jump record holder.

He came fifth in the Munich Olympics in the long jump final and is the only person to have jointly held the UK national records for long jump, triple jump and high jump. He also ran 4 x 100m for GB and won gold and silver medals in the European, Commonwealth and World Student games.

"Typically, he was modest and unassuming about these achievements," said Alisdair.

He was a fantastic long jump coach and a superb all-round athletics coach. Felsted on at least two occasions came back from the Achilles Relays at Iffley Road, Oxford with the Harold Abrahams Cup for winning the 4 x 100m relays in the ISAC.

Latterly, he coached Millfield School student Jazmin Sawyers to the long jump finals in Rio.

Alan was a true all-round sportsman and many will remember him competing in *Superstars* on the BBC and coming second to Brian Jacks in the UK final.

He went on to compete in the *World Superstars* event in Florida where he broke one of his life's ambitions to go sub-two minutes in the 800m.

"I was so lucky to start my career at Felsted with Alan as my mentor. I learnt more about life, how to conduct myself and how to think from Alan than anybody else on this planet. He was one of my dearest friends and I shall miss him so much," added Alisdair.



Alan Lerwill, housemaster of Manor House in 1986

## Michael Craven

(Felsted teacher 1955-1991)

It is with sadness that we report the death of Michael Craven on 14 November, aged 91. Michael taught at Felsted between 1955 and 1991, and gave his name to the classroom Craven. His roles included second master, housemaster of Windsor's and Gepp's, and head of English.

Michael joined Felsted in September 1955 to acquire the diploma in education after completing his English degree at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. He met his wife Oriole in 1956 at Felsted when she was appointed as a sister in the school's sanatorium. They went on to have three children: Andrew (f66-71), Nicola (m77-79) and Matthew (fg71-81).

Michael was talented at sport and ran Felsted's sailing club for five years and helped to coach cricket, hockey and rugby throughout his career. In 1967 he was appointed head of English and held this post for 18 years. In that time he was also housemaster of Windsor's in 1968 and then Gepp's between 1969 and 1982. In 1985 he became director of studies and second master until 1990, before retiring in 1991 after 36 years of dedicated service to the school.



## Charles Elwin

(Felsted teacher 1978-1996)



Charles Elwin died on 19 April 2021, aged 67. Charles taught at Felsted for 18 years between 1978 and 1996, becoming head of geography before accepting a post at a sixth form college in Singapore. He travelled widely, both in Asia and

around the world. He retired in Thailand and maintained a love of travel.

## Chris Megahey

(Felsted teacher 1981-2016)

Chris Megahey passed away peacefully at home on 28 November 2020. Chris started teaching at Felsted in 1981 and was head of mathematics for 26 years. He completed an extraordinary 35 years of service at the school before retiring in 2016. Chris was a devoted husband to Karen and father to Steven and Sammy.



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## OBITUARIES

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### Jean Wall

(Felsted staff 1972-2018)

One of Felsted's longest serving workers Jean Wall sadly died in January after an incredible 46 years' service before finally retiring in 2018. She looked after the staff Common Room for five years, was matron for Gepp's and Deacon's for nine

years, and helped out in the catering department after she finished working as a house matron.

### Professor Michael Pitteway

Leading figure in computer sciences

Prof Michael Pitteway (g47-52) died on 26 December 2020 at the age of 86. After Felsted, Michael gained a scholarship to Queen's College, Cambridge and went on to be appointed as head of computer science at Brunel University. He was a fellow of the British Computer Society, the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, and the Institute of Physics. The Pitteway classroom at Felsted is named in his honour.



### Patrick Robson

Patrick Robson (a49-54) was born in Radlett but lived for most of his married life in Guildford, Surrey. He was a long serving member of the OF Society committee and was elected president in 1994, a position he held until 1999. Patrick was an avid supporter of the school and the Felsted School Mission. He finished his working life as managing director of Livingstone Hire and was on the main board of directors of Brammer Limited. He was a truly loyal Old Felstedian. Patrick died on 31 October 2020, aged 85.



### Alexander Temple McCune

Alexander Temple McCune (dc11-13) sadly passed away on 13 August in Katharine House hospice, Oxfordshire, at the age of 26. He had been diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma of the kidney since November 2020. Alex (pictured left in 2012) left Felsted to study psychology at York University, then to Linacre College, Oxford to study for a Master's degree and was part way through his DPhil at University college, Oxford.



## OF SPORT NEWS

# GOLFERS HAPPY TO BE BACK PLAYING COMPETITION FIXTURES

by Stuart Mott (h69-74), president of the Old Felstedian Golf Society

**The effects of Covid were still felt again this year with none of the OFGS meetings able to take place.**

However, all of the team events took place. In May we narrowly failed to qualify for the Grafton Morrish finals. This was despite racking up an impressive score that would normally guarantee a September visit to the finals.

As the re-scheduled Halford Hewitt and Mathews Cup were also in September another team event might have been a bridge too far for our limited resources.

In the senior events, Tim Chetwood assembled strong sides for both the Mellin and the Burles Salvagers. The Mellin side reached the semi-final where they lost narrowly to Forest, the eventual winners, with Tim and Sandy Dunlop maintaining their unbeaten record.

In the Burles we came close to achieving a successful defence of the trophy, losing the final to Shrewsbury in extra time.

Charlie Wilcox led our side into the Halford Hewitt, ably assisted by OFGS captain Phil Graham.

We played Mill Hill, at Deal, in the first round, losing 2-3 with the deciding match featuring Chris Olley and Ross Abbott reaching the 5th extra hole.

Jon Regan made a strong debut, providing a victory in partnership with Phil Graham. The

other victory came from the strong pairing of Will Dunn and Charlie Duke.

In the Plate this same pair won their match at the first extra hole to clinch a victory over Highgate by 2-1, the other win coming from the Wilcox/Tom Copnell combo.

The reward for this victory was a match against a strong Haileybury side, who defeated us in a tense contest.

The Mathews Cup foursomes took place at the end of September. Our side, led by Phil Graham, finished third. It was of particular note that Jon Regan had a hole in one on Thorndon's 12th hole.

In addition to the above we managed to complete matches against the other Essex schools (with limited success).

Will Doe was also able to put a side together for our highly enjoyable trip to Deal.

It really was fantastic to be able to play all this competition golf once again.

*Sadly, the society lost two of its most distinguished members during the year. Tony Jackson and Michael Williams supported the society both on and off the golf course for many years. They will be greatly missed.*



**Above:** The Mathews Cup (Left to right: Messrs. Mott, Meyer, Hichens, Olley, Regan and Graham)

**Above right:** OF Golf Royal Cinque Ports Deal (Left to right): Steve Collins (RCPGC), Stuart Mott, Mike Perry (RCPGC) and Paul Markey

**Right:** William Doe (left) and David Robson (right) with RCPGC members Peter Logue and Chris Rechtern



## OFGS FIXTURES 2022

### FEBRUARY

26 Spring meeting at Aldeburgh Golf Club. Match manager Tim Hedin

### APRIL

7-10 The Halford Hewitt at Royal St George's and Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club. Match manager Charlie Wilcox

### MAY

15 Grafton Morrish qualifier at Gog Magog Golf Club. Match manager Phil Graham

25 Extra Spring meeting at Chelmsford Golf Club. Match manager Dudley Simpson

### JUNE

1 Summer meeting at West Sussex Golf Club. Match manager Oliver Stocken

6-9 Putting competition at Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. Match manager Mike Rath

16 Putting competition finals at Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. Match manager Mike Rath

### 29-1 JULY

Mellin, Burles and Millard Trophies at West Hill Golf Club. Match manager Tim Chetwood

### SEPTEMBER

25 Mathews Cup, Essex Public Schools scratch foursomes at Thorndon Park Golf Club. Match manager Phil Graham

### OCTOBER

6-9 Grafton Morrish finals at Royal West Norfolk and Hunstanton Golf Club. Match Manager Phil Graham

If you'd like to play in any of these fixtures, please get in touch via [ofs@felsted.org](mailto:ofs@felsted.org)

# Coward-Holley clinches Olympic bronze in Tokyo

by James Garner

**OF Matt Coward-Holley (dc08-13) landed a bronze medal in his first Olympic Games.**

Despite the challenges that the Covid pandemic presented to the athletes in Japan, Matt coped with the pressure and shot his way into a podium finish in the Men's Trap Shooting.

He told *Essex Life* magazine: "I was extremely happy to come away from my first Olympics with a bronze medal, but at the same time I was left feeling dissatisfied. Gold was my goal."

The Tokyo Olympics Men's Trap event at the Asaka shooting range turned out to be a tight affair.

"The scores through qualification at Tokyo were very high, so I knew the margin for error was extremely low," said Matt.

Despite a poor start, Matt recovered well scoring 14 successive hits in the following rounds to put himself into the six-man elimination final - and contention for a medal.

Matt scored 33 out of 40 clays in the final, missing out on the gold medal play-off by just one shot.

His sights are now firmly set on the next Olympics in Paris, where hopefully his family and friends can support him in person.

He told *Essex Life* that the lack of spectators at Tokyo was a shame, but he added that the



organisers did a phenomenal job of running an extremely efficient and safe Games.

"My next challenge is Paris 2024, where I'll be aiming for a very different outcome."

Matt is the 21st OF to represent their country at the Olympic Games and follows other Felsted sporting greats in winning a medal such as Johnny Douglas, who won gold in the boxing in 1908.

## OFs RETURN FOR TENNIS

Charlie Broom (fdc09-16), Matt Morley-Jacob (fac10-17) and his father Richard Morley-Jacob (b81-86) returned to Felsted with friends for a tennis match on the grass courts against pupils on 19 September. Sadly, the fixture was cut short due to heavy rain which forced the match to be abandoned after just one round!



**From left to right:**  
Dan Gilliver, Charlie Broom, Mark Readman, Richard Morley-Jacob, Matt Morley-Jacob, Andy Broom

## IN BRIEF...

**Cricketer Cup 2021** Felsted Robins took on Old Cranleighans on 13 June in the first round of the Cricketer Cup competition. The team travelled to Cranleigh for the fixture and lost by 62 runs. The Cricketer Cup draw for the 2022 season has just been announced with the Felsted Robins being drawn away against Eton Ramblers on Sunday 12 June.

**Felsted OF Football result** On Sunday 20 June, Felsted OFFC played a special football match against the boys in the upper sixth at Felsted and secured a 3-0 win. It was great to see everyone back on the pitch.



**From left to right:**  
**Back:** J. King, G. Jones, J. Piper, F. Burns, M. Gilham, J. Smith, T. Kingham, P. King  
**Front:** J. Burslem, R. Hadley, C. Lewis, S. Holland, J. Head, O. Grayson, J. Woodmore

## COLLINS' SECOND RECORD-BREAKING OCEAN ROW

Bella Collins (f03-06) rowed the Pacific Ocean in the summer in record-breaking time. Here she tells James Garner about the experience

### **Hi Bella, you must be proud of the Ocean Sheroes' row in the Great Pacific Ocean Race?**

Thanks, I'm so proud of the team and what we've achieved. The expedition was a small race, just three boats, rowing from San Francisco to Hawaii. This is 2,400 nautical miles and is entirely unsupported - we eat, sleep and survive on the boat without any external support. We were four women from different ages and backgrounds who came together to row and raise money for the Seabin Project as well as start conversations around positivity, people and planet.

### **How was it that you became involved in this challenge?**

I've previously rowed the Atlantic when I was 23 and have since had an ambition to row another ocean. I think I was quite young and naïve when I took on the Atlantic and I wanted to know, now I'm a little older and wiser, if I could do it again. I was also keen to push myself to take on more responsibility throughout the campaign on another row.

### **The race took place earlier this year, but we were still in the midst of a global pandemic at the start of the year, so how much impact did Covid have on planning and your training?**

Covid had a huge impact on our training. Living in different parts of the country, we couldn't get together for training or campaign work. It also meant we didn't have the face time to really get to know each other, something which is so important when you're about to cross an ocean together.

The gyms all closed and we weren't able to get on the water for practice rows as often as we wanted either. The final hurdle was that we weren't able to fly directly into the US when we were due to and had to fly to Antigua for two weeks "quarantining" before being allowed to enter America.

However, all these challenges made us more determined and more resilient, we had to learn to adapt and work together and ultimately that led to us being stronger as a team.

### **You've also rowed the Atlantic back in 2015, so how hard was this challenge compared with that?**

They were completely different rows each with their own challenges. The Atlantic was harder in one way - we had a hurricane, we nearly lost

our rudder, we had a whale that accidentally tried to sink us and more. However, on the Atlantic we had more days where we had following weather, where we could surf the waves and make the most of the trade winds. The Pacific was much harder physically. The weather rarely helped us and we had to fight many sub-currents that made it feel like we were rowing in treacle.

### **The charity you were rowing for - the Seabin Project - aims to have pollution-free oceans for future generations. Why did you choose this charity?**

We wanted to work with an organisation that wasn't just being reactive to plastic found in our marine environments, but was also being proactive in preventing waste ending up there in the first place. By capturing waste in marinas and ports, the charity researches where that waste comes from and how to stop it getting there again through education and community engagement.

### **What was the condition of the Pacific ocean like as you rowed it?**

Getting away from San Francisco was the hardest and we were pre-warned of this. All the currents and winds as you leave the continental plate are trying to push you south. We wanted to go west. So the first five to 10 days were tormented with choppy side waves making rowing incredibly hard.

We then experienced some big weather that pushed us further south and meant we had to batten down the hatches for a hair-raising night of big waves crashing on top of the boat. Almost immediately after that, we experienced a pancake-flat ocean and bluebird days and it was a privilege to see the power of mother nature and how it can change your landscape in just a matter of hours.

### **What was the worst thing about the race and the hardest thing that you personally had to endure?**

The worst thing about the race was definitely those first five days. One of our crew was severely seasick which meant we had to cover some of her night shifts and it's not fun to see someone you care about being that unwell. It was utterly exhausting and to be honest we were barely functioning. It was a matter of row, sleep, repeat. Eating, brushing teeth, cleaning, changing clothes - all these things were beyond our energy levels in those first few days.



### **It is a notoriously hard race and only 22 crews had completed it before this year - were there any scary moments and did you ever contemplate quitting? It sounded as though you had an incredible team spirit?**

There were a handful of scary moments where you're reminded that mother nature is in control and you have to respect it. However, even at our lowest points, the thought of quitting never happened.

Our team had a fierce amount of determination! That team spirit you mention was so important to help each other through dark times, of which we all had at varying times.

Towards the end, when things got really repetitive, myself, Lily and P would discuss daily gritudes on the first shift of each day to pick each other up. By doing this every day, you're really challenged to think about what you are appreciative of and it really helps to take yourself out of a funky mood.

### **Your older OF brother Angus also took part in the same race and also broke the world record. Are amazing performances in endurance rowing races something that runs in the family?**

There is definitely something in our blood as my uncle also rows across oceans. I'm so proud of Angus, he's rowed the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and inspires me in the way he leads and coaches teams with such grace. I wouldn't have had the confidence to step into this world without his encouragement or achieved my crossings without his support.

Thank you to all those who have contributed pictures to this edition of *The Old Felstedian*