

APRIL 2023

# The Old Felstedian

**The Sustainability Issue**



Old Felstedian  
Society





# Old Felstedian Society

## 2022-23 Committee members

### President

Sarah Macdiarmid (m85-87)

### Chair

Michael Yeatts (e76-81)

*From 2023*

Jeston Na Nakhorn (e85-90)

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Julian Scofield (d88-93)

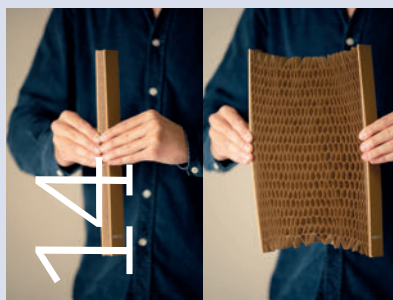
### Hon Treasurer

James Willington (fb82-92)

For full details please visit:  
[www.felsted.org/ofs/of-society](http://www.felsted.org/ofs/of-society)

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## FORGING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WE FACE

**Tackling climate change, the biggest common challenge that faces humanity, will define us and the generations of OFs that follow.**

I firmly believe the starkness of the challenge cannot be under-estimated. Get it right and we will save the planet and our lives as we know them, get it wrong and our lives will be changed forever.

Now, it looks as if we are on the wrong side of the equation. Yes, attitudes are changing towards the environment, and many of us feel we are doing what we can, but are we acting fast enough and doing as much as necessary?

One OF, who is a prominent and influential thinker in this area, certainly thinks not. Professor Sir Dieter Helm's (d70-74) book *Net Zero - How we can stop causing climate change* is a seminal piece, and offers a wake-up call.

We were unfortunately unable to interview Dieter, due to his incredibly busy schedule, but in the preface to *Net Zero*, he states that in 30 years we have made no progress and the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere continues to increase.

Dieter adds: "...the root cause of climate change is one that is uncomfortable: our unsustainable carbon lifestyles." To change this we will have to rebase our lifestyles, which will hurt in the short term, but we will benefit in the longer term. There is no escaping the consequences of not doing so, he adds. "If we don't, nature will bite back". It's a stark warning from one of the UK's most prominent thinkers on the issue.

We could do worse than follow the example of several OFs who we feature in this issue and who are leading the way in the green economy.

Our cover feature Anna Foster (n90-92) on page 12 is inspirational in the way she has launched a denim brand that recycles old, unwanted denim into new fashion garments. The ultimate upcycling in a sector known for fast fashion and waste on an astronomical scale. Anna is driven to offering consumers an alternative to our throwaway society, something that is built and designed to last and stand the test of time.

We also learn more about the careers of four OFs on page 14 who are working in the green sector and are passionate about tackling climate change, as well as getting to know Katherine Farr on page 16, who is the member of staff leading a project to rewild the school's Bury pond area.

Finally, if you are still unsure of the seriousness of the situation, I urge you to read Dieter's books on climate change and the environment.

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



### Magazine wrapper – 100% compostable

Our packaging is made of environmentally-friendly potato starch film which is compostable.

# Editor steps down from OF Magazine after twenty years

by James Garner

**All good things come to an end and after being editor of *The Old Felstedian* for two decades, I feel that now is the right time for me to be stepping down.**

As my last issue, it would seem remiss of me not to reflect on the past 20 years at the helm of the OF Magazine. The biggest changes have been at the school, which has altered beyond all recognition from when I was there. Much of it for the better, but that doesn't stop a nostalgic trip down memory lane to a time of NIPS and art classes in the ancient Old School building, pints in the sixth-form club and traipsing across The Front to the first team Cricket Pavilion.

The magazine has changed in this time too. My first issue, which feels like a generation ago in 2003 was a 16-page A4 magazine and was

still in its infancy of transitioning from a black-and-white newsletter to a magazine.

I remember meeting Bill Lake (g55-60), the then OF Society president and secretary Mike Jones (d58-63) in a Ball Bros wine bar in London Bridge, as though it was yesterday. There, they persuaded me, over a couple of bottles of red wine, to take on the mantle left by Clare Rowan (m79-81) and continue the changes to the OF Magazine that she had started.

Since then, we have redesigned at least twice. The last time in 2015 was the most radical – we added lots of new features and sections and increased the paper size to bigger than A4.

In the past 20 years, I've maintained one central editorial principle – we are writing a magazine for OFs that focuses on our interests, which are often aligned with the school, but not entirely the same.

Most of us are proud to be alumni and are keenly interested in developments at the school, but we are also equally keen to find out what other OFs are up to, and so there is a fine balancing act to ensure all needs are met.

In my time at the helm of the magazine, I've interviewed many OFs, notably all three former England cricketers: Derek Pringle (e74-77), John Stephenson (fa74-83) and Nick Knight (fb78-88). Other interviewees who stick in the memory are former head of the British Army, The Lord Dannatt (f60-64) on the topic of leadership. I was totally inspired by Matthew Spacie MBE (d83-85), the OF who founded the Magic Bus charity in India, and it was incredibly interesting to learn all about artificial intelligence from Professor Toby Walsh (a77-82) in 2018.

The one section that I have found more challenging than any other is *Obituaries*. To begin with I was all for reducing the number of obituaries, but then I would read the incredible feats achieved by an OF sadly no longer with us and be left agonising about how to cover their accomplishments.

It is always an incredibly poignant section and each year I dread the annual list of those who had died in case any of my cohort had gone too early, such as this year with the passing of Simon Kent (fc82-90) and Henry Hichens (c84-89). By the end I decided to accept that



significant OFs would pass, and we would need to cover their extraordinary achievements and reading these is what binds us together as an alumni.

In the past 20 years, I've had the pleasure of working alongside three headmasters. The first being Stephen Roberts, followed by Dr Mike Walker, with whom I established an annual interview, rather the publishing the school report. We have continued this with the current head Chris Townsend. I feel this approach gives us a more informative article and a better understanding of what is going on at Felsted and the direction it is heading.

When relaunching in 2015, we developed the idea of themed issues, covering the arts, science and technology, leadership, global, equality and this year the sustainability. It's been a great hook to try and pull together a diverse readership, but like everything, it probably has a shelf life.

And that includes me too... It is time to pass on the baton to someone else. I've enjoyed my yearly foray into the Felsted community but the commitment hasn't got any easier, and with a young family and a demanding business it is the right time to bow out.

I've been lucky to have had the assistance of firstly Eileen Keegan and then Selina Joslin in the Development Office and thanks must also go to the OF Society, the Common Room, and the school for their support.

Mostly I would like to say a special thanks to my fellow OFs, especially those who have sent letters and emails of support and congratulations, or even a missive of complaint, or have willingly taken part in articles for the magazine. OFs are a resourceful bunch and I have never struggled to fill an issue with our stories.

All that remains is for me to say is 'Garde Ta Foy' and best wishes for the future health of the OF Society, Felsted School and the wider Felsted community.

## Contributor

### Imogen Gander (fmm11-18)

Imogen is currently undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Law, having recently completed her MPhil in Classics at Girton College, Cambridge. She hopes her legal studies will lead to a career as a chancery barrister, and thus far is enjoying developing her knowledge of a new academic discipline.



## The Old Felstedian

2022 issue

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



## World Class rower named in Forbes 30 Under 30

Sportswoman Bella Collins (f03-06) has been named in Forbes magazine's top '30 Under 30' for Sports and Games in Europe for 2022. Bella has already set two world records in her career. The most recent being in July 2021, when she and her team were the fastest team of four to row from California to Hawaii, taking just 35 days. In 2015, she set the record for the fastest female team to row across

the Atlantic Ocean. She was joined on the list by French football star Kylian Mbappe and Formula 1 racing driver Charles LeClerc.

## Charlotte Gray plays key role in organising Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

OF Charlotte Gray (fgn06-11) was a key part in the organisation of last year's Commonwealth Games. Charlotte's role as venue operations manager at the Alexander Stadium meant she oversaw the re-development of the athletics stadium, which hosted the opening and closing ceremonies along with the track and field events. Charlotte had previously worked for the Football Association in various roles in the run up to UEFA Euro 2020 and UEFA Women's Euro 2022. Charlotte's current role is stadium events manager at England Rugby.



## Tony Hunter honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award for ground-breaking research

Professor Tony Hunter (e56-61), a British-American biologist who is Renato Dulbecco chair in cancer research at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, has been honoured for his findings in cancer research. Tony uncovered protein tyrosine phosphorylation as a common cellular mechanism capable of contributing to cellular growth and proliferation, and in some cases, the development of cancer. Since his discovery over 80 tyrosine and serine kinase inhibitors have been approved for clinical use and his work has firmly established a new class of targeted cancer therapies.



## OF shines at BBC Proms

Recent leaver Sana Abu-Jabir (fmn08-22) performed alongside legendary composers at the country's biggest celebration of classical music – the BBC Proms. Sana is a principal percussionist with the National Youth Orchestra. Whilst at Felsted, she was Felsted's Young Musician of the Year 2022 and performed with the Felsted Jazz Band and orchestra. She has since been awarded scholarships at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and the Royal College of Music, accepting a place at RAM.

## OF wins Britain's most prestigious singing award

Mezzo-soprano Esme Bronwen-Smith (bn03-13) is the most recent top place winner at the 2022 Kathleen Ferrier Awards. She graduated from the Royal College of Music with a Masters in Vocal Performance where she won both the 2020 Lieder and 2021 Lies Askonas competitions. Esme has performed a variety of theatrical and operatic roles including Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Glyndebourne Festival), Nerone in Händel's *Agrippina* (English Touring Opera) and Irene in Händel's *Theodora* (St Paul's Sinfonia).

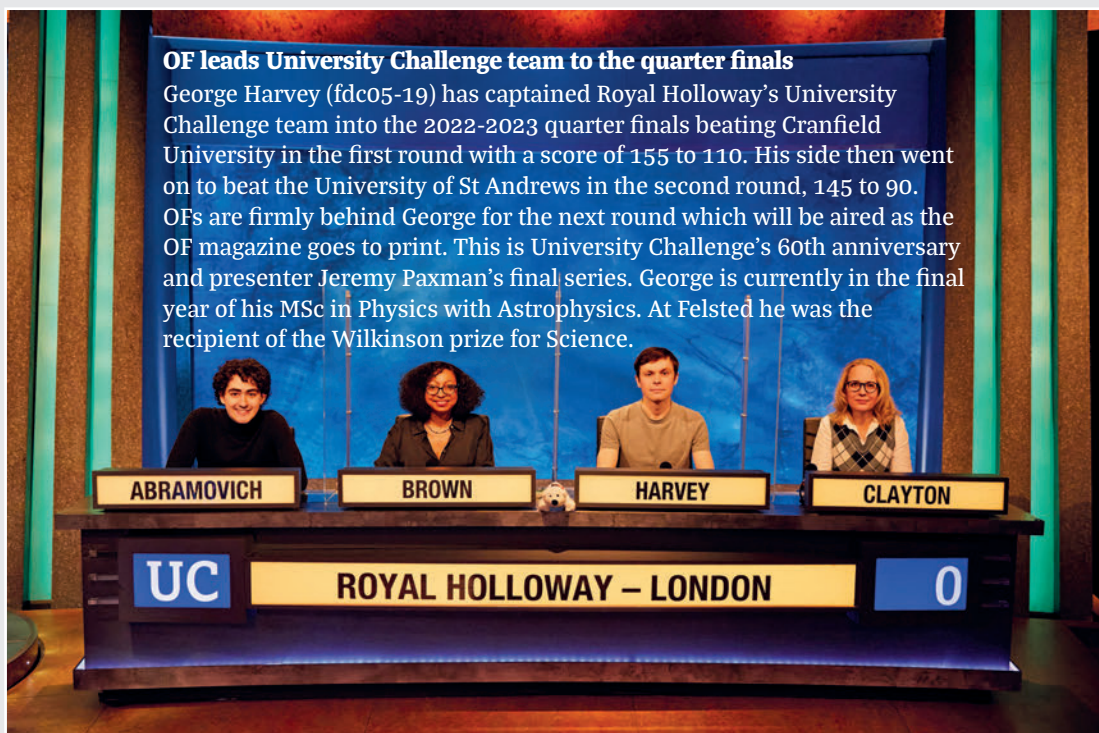


PHOTO: VICTORIA CADISH



### OF leads University Challenge team to the quarter finals

George Harvey (fdc05-19) has captained Royal Holloway's University Challenge team into the 2022-2023 quarter finals beating Cranfield University in the first round with a score of 155 to 110. His side then went on to beat the University of St Andrews in the second round, 145 to 90. OFs are firmly behind George for the next round which will be aired as the OF magazine goes to print. This is University Challenge's 60th anniversary and presenter Jeremy Paxman's final series. George is currently in the final year of his MSc in Physics with Astrophysics. At Felsted he was the recipient of the Wilkinson prize for Science.



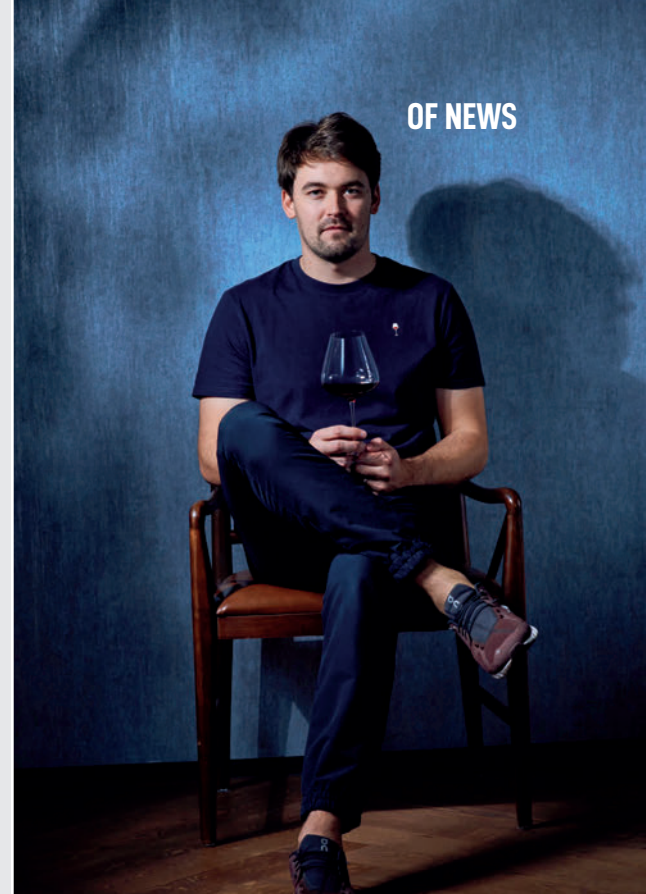
### Josh Wisbey awarded Sandhurst Sword of Honour

British Army Officer cadet Josh Wisbey (dc11-16) has been awarded the prestigious Sword of Honour given to the cadet considered by the Commandment to be the best of the regular commissioning course. This honour marks him out as one of the finest young prospects in the British Army. His leadership ability was examined against tough competition, in the most demanding of training environments and at an institution with a world-class reputation.



### Entrepreneur in Forbes 30 Under 30

Entrepreneur OF Alexander Mackh (e07-12), founder of the Switzerland-based mouth-blown glassware company Grassl Glass, has been selected for Forbes magazine's top '30 Under 30' for Art & Culture in Europe in 2022. He started the company to make wine glasses that matched the wine's style rather than a wine's region or grape variety. A number of significant wineries across Europe are using Grassl Glass, along with the UK's three-Michelin star restaurant, L'Enclume in Cumbria.



### Jeremy Holland-Smith composes songs for Netflix festive classic

Composer OF Jeremy Holland-Smith (d90-95) has written the score for *Scrooge: A Christmas Carol* which was featured on Netflix. The computer animated film is a supernatural, time-travelling, musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved Christmas story, and features re-imagined songs by Jeremy and from the late two-time Oscar and Grammy winner, Leslie Bricusse. Jeremy and Stephen Donnelly also wrote two new songs for the film *Later Never Comes* and *Tell Me*.



PHOTO: SADLER'S WELLS

### New Sadler's Wells ballet composed by Gus Nicholson

Talented OF musician Gus Nicholson (fdc06-12) composed the score for a brand new version of *Anne of Green Gables*, which was performed by the London Children's Ballet at the Peacock Theatre, London. The 80 minute musical score was performed by an impressive 20-piece orchestra.



# OF Society welcomes Na Nakhorn as its new chair

by James Garner

**The Old Felstedian Society has elected a new chairman Jeston Na Nakhorn (e85-90). He succeeds Michael Yeatts (e76-81), who has been chair of the society for nearly a decade.**

Jeston said of the appointment: "I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Felsted and am a proud to be an Old Felstedian. To be asked to be chairman of the OF Society is a great honour and one that I couldn't turn down."

"I feel I have a lot to give and welcome the chance to continue to energise the OF community to ensure we all take advantage of such a superb network."

Jeston is currently chief of staff for specialist asset manager Gresham House. After leaving Felsted and Bristol University, he went to officer training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1996. He served on three operational tours abroad with the Coldstream Guards in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

He left the army in 2013 working for J Sainsbury, before joining Gresham House in 2019.

Jeston is married to Julia and they live in Ipswich with their two teenage children, George and Arthur, who are both at Ipswich School.

Jeston said that from what he has learnt about the OF Society there is a great opportunity to make more of the Felsted network and expand its reach into year groups currently less involved.

"I want to build on the work of my predecessor Michael and I take this opportunity to thank him for his service."

"I am keen to safeguard the future of the Old Felstedian Society and ensure our alumni always have somewhere to turn for support. I want to work with the school to leverage the links that overlap with wider Felsted stakeholders, such as pupils, parents, Common Room and supporters."

OF Society President Sarah Macdiarmid said she would like to thank Michael Yeatts on behalf of the society for all his work and commitment for the past nine years.

"He gracefully chaired meetings, liaised with members, took a measured approach to all challenges, and showed a real passion for the school and all that it represents."

Michael said that he was thoroughly grateful for his time on the society's committee, for the front row seat to watch Felsted School and for the opportunity to help the OF Society move forward.

"Who would have thought I would amass so many new wonderful friends along the way? The Felsted community is lucky to have Jeston take on the role - undoubtedly a great leader and possessing a passion for progress in the OF Society."

Head Chris Townsend said: "Michael has been a great supporter of Felsted over the years, as a student, OF, parent, and more recently as chair of the OF Society."

## WITH THANKS TO THE EDITOR OF THE OF MAGAZINE

**James Garner, editor of the OF Magazine for 20 years, is stepping down after the latest edition of *The Old Felstedian* reached OFs this spring.**

Old Felstedian Society Chairman Jeston Na Nakhorn and OF Society President Sarah Macdiarmid said they would like to thank James Garner for all the work he has done contributing to the success of the OF Magazine, with the 2022 edition being his 20th.

When James took over the magazine in 2003, it was a 16-page A4 magazine and still moving away from a black-and-white newsletter to a more professional looking edition.

"Under his steer, James and the team have changed many things about the magazine, with a complete redesign at least twice," they said.

"In 20 years, James has worked with three headmasters, and followed their influences over the evolving school. We would like to thank him for all his work," they added.

Former OF Society chair Michael Yeatts said: "It is hard to overestimate the impact James has had on the magazine. Not only has he been editor for 20 years, but he has also consistently developed the magazine to be relevant to the readership."

"This is no mean feat given that there is an eight-decade span in the ages of the more than 7,000 OFs who can access the magazine."

"So, our thanks go out to James for his skill, dedication, and commitment to the OF Society," added Michael.

"He has carried out this role with great commitment and a real concern to do what is best for others. Although standing down, his input will continue to be valued as he remains chair of the Felsted Mission."

## IN MEMORIAM

### Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

21 April 1926 – 8 September 2022



**Like many communities throughout the UK, many OFs were saddened by the sudden death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022.**

The longest-reigning British monarch died of old age at Balmoral Castle in Scotland at the age of 96. For many OFs, she will be the only monarch they have lived under, until the succession of King Charles III.

Felsted has a long relationship with the Royal Family with the first recorded interaction by the Felsted Archives being Elizabeth I's visit to Lord Riche at Lee Priory in Essex from 21 August to 25 August 1561. The visit reportedly cost Lord Riche £389, which has been calculated to be worth almost £100,000 in 2014. Three years later, Lord Riche founded Felsted School.

It was a long wait for the next recorded Royal visit, which was undertaken by Princess Alexandra, cousin of Elizabeth II, who gave out prizes at the school's speech day on 14 June 1957.

A big celebration of the school's 400th year anniversary was attended by the Queen Mother, who visited Felsted on 25 July 1964. She arrived by helicopter landing on the Front and was given a full tour of the school, including the ladies living in the Felsted almshouses. The visit was filmed by Marconi TV.

It wasn't until 25 years later in 1989 that Princess Anne visited Felsted to open the Lord Riche Hall and then a further 25 years after that the late Queen attended the school's 450th anniversary celebrations.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh dazzled the school with their attendance on 6 May 2014,

meeting with Headmaster Dr Mike Walker and touring the school.

Following the death of Her Majesty the Queen, the school sent a message of condolence to King Charles III. A reply followed, thanking the school and the Felsted community for their wishes following the Queen's death.





## Felsted Mission takes small steps towards bigger goals of sustainability

**Like many companies, organisations and charities, the Felsted School Mission has looked to reduce waste and carbon emissions.**

Tom Booker, community projects manager of the Ascension Community Trust (ACT), says that everyone is involved with the pursuit of sustainability at the Ascension. "We all have a part to play, both rolling up our sleeves and raising our voices," he says.

"Whilst larger goals of sustainability may seem overwhelming, we must start somewhere and build small steps into eventual long-term transformation.

"At ACT, via our Foodbank, we already re-direct donations of surplus food which would otherwise go to waste, from business to the local people most in need."

The Felsted School Mission is also planning to implement new composting systems to repurpose food waste as well as install rainwater capture equipment to reduce water consumption.



Above: Volunteer preparing donated food



Left: Composting at the Ascension gardening project

Additionally, the ACT recently took part in a survey to aid Newham Council's development of a sustainable transport strategy.

"This month we are introducing '1 Green Step', where each month we all commit to one small change which improves sustainability, even something as simple as turning off lights or closing doors to save heat," adds Tom.



"All small actions, but the more such adaption is embraced by other charities, businesses and wider society, the more of an impact there will be."

*Felsted School Mission has supported the Ascension Church and its parish activities for 140 years.*



@MissionFelsted ascensioncommunitytrust.org

## Development Office reports on new ways of distributing donations and underlines importance of bursaries

by Director of Development, Kate Love

**It's been a busy year in the Felsted Development Office, with 'au revours', welcomes, new initiatives and exciting plans.**

We were sad last June to bid farewell to Selina Joslin, who managed our engagement programme for over eight years. Arriving just before the 450th anniversary year, Selina took forward a busy diary of communications and events, working closely with the OF Society and we wish her well.

In October, Grace Sullivan joined us as engagement manager. She brings a wealth of experience from schools, charities and higher education.

Grace is reviewing our diary of activities so there really is something for everyone. Look out for our busy social media feeds, and do join the Felsted Network on LinkedIn.

One new event we hope will become a fixture is the Felsted Family Day on 25 June, when we will be welcoming back anyone who wants to visit the school, for a busy programme of sport, performances and activities. More details will follow in the coming weeks. Bring your families as all are welcome.

Alongside events and communications, our fundraising continues to bring immediate benefit across the school.

In the autumn, we had our inaugural Disbursement Panel meeting. This includes school leadership, teaching staff, current parents and most importantly some of our students. This means we can agree as a community how we spend some of the money donated to us, so it is of immediate benefit and has a positive impact for our students.

Some of the items we have already invested in include equipment to livestream and playback sports fixtures. We have three new 3D printers for our budding designers and engineers. There's a wider selection of brass instruments for the Prep School. We provided a precision telescope. We've refitted the Design and Technology department kitchen with more equipment. We've provided more kit for e-sports and the Music department now has a concert-standard set of timpani.

Look out on social media to see how giving to Felsted supports young people in and out of the classroom.

## Telethon 2023

**This Easter, we'll be running our first telethon for many years, with some of our recent leavers calling out to a cross-section of OFs and current parents.**

We're hoping to contact many people to hear about their life after Felsted - and we're always looking for people to volunteer time, experience and/or expertise to support the life of the school.

We'll also be raising money for those Disbursement Panel projects that provide immediate and wide-ranging benefit across the entire community.

Our focus though is bursaries. We know individual potential is spread evenly across society, but the means to make the most of that potential is not.

Felsted already provides means-tested support to many students and every year we offer a number of truly transformative bursaries. However, the need from promising young people, often in challenging circumstances, far outstrips what we can provide from our own funds. This is why donations are so important for the future of the school, and its mission to provide educational opportunities irrespective of background.

**Please consider supporting us if you can.**

SAVE  
the DATE

Date for your diaries:

**THE OF SOCIETY SUMMER DRINKS PARTY**

will be held at the In and Out Naval and Military Club  
No 4 St James Square, London on **8 JUNE 2023**.

More details will follow shortly.



# OF Announcements

## Weddings

James Grech (fec06-11) married Bethany Simpson on 4 June in a private venue in Great Easton. Their love story started whilst on a skiing trip at university. OFs Alex Davis, Sam Purkiss, Barney Savill, Adam Jones, Ben Ward, Carlos Pohle, Henry Dipper and Ismail Fayyaz helped to celebrate their special day.



Matthew Sellors (a82-87) and Dominique Brazier were married on 24 April at Felsted School Chapel by Rev Nigel Little. After the ceremony, they both travelled to Maldon to complete the Maldon Mud Race in their wedding outfits.



Harriet Rowntree-Taylor (fnb05-12) married Gareth Sloan on 10 September at the Holy Trinity Church in Pleshey, followed by a reception in the garden of her parents' home. Felsted friends Camilla Bartell, Shannon Boshell, Alex Burton, Frances Marshall (former staff), Alice Pattison, Freya Milford (left to right) helped to celebrate their special day, along with sister Lauren Green and brother, William Rowntree-Taylor.



James Dewar (a03-07) married Lindsay Cross on 11 August at Hatfield Place surrounded by family and friends with OF Alex Bartell being one of the best men.



Alex Marjoribanks (fec00-10) married Sugi Ganesan on 26 August in the Shangri-La Hotel at The Shard with their wedding reception being held at The Parsonage in Great Dunmow on 28 August. Felsted friends Jon Dennis, James Littleton, Chris Wareham, Charlie Marsden, Ben Holmes, Julian Thake and Sean Perrie were present to celebrate the occasion.





## Births



Tom Mason (b87-91) and Katie Ellwood are proud to announce the arrival of their son Jack, a beautiful little brother to sister Grace, on 29 June 2022.

Charlotte Hall (née King fb94-04) and her husband James welcomed their baby son Ollie to the world on 27 July 2022.



Jonathan Brenson (fc96-02) and Samantha Abery are pleased to announce the birth of Albie James Brenson on 7 November 2022.



Torty (née Lee fg93-06) and Tom Newman celebrated the birth of their son William Teddy Charles Minôt Newman on 7 November 2022.

## Graduations

James Austin (fac12-19) has graduated with a first-class honours in Economics from the University of Southampton and is now training to become a chartered accountant with Haysmacintyre LLP.



Madeline Witcomb (fmn03-17) graduated from St George's University of London in Medicine and is now working as a junior doctor in acute medicine.

Sara Faraj Dellipiani (tn17-19) graduated from the University of Leeds in Philosophy and Politics and is now studying for an MA Law at the University of Law.



Angus Muir (fec08-17) graduated from the University of Edinburgh with first-class honours in International Relations. He is now working at NatWest Group's Strategy, Corporate Development and Sustainability Graduate programme.



Olivia Snooks (fbn12-19) graduated in Sports and Exercise Psychology from Loughborough University and is now studying for a MSc in Sports Science: Sport and Exercise Psychology.





# Townsend committed to Felsted and driving sustainable future

*Chris Townsend has been Felsted School's Head for almost a decade. In their last interview, he discusses the school's environmental future with James Garner*

**Felsted has been under the leadership of Head Chris Townsend for the past eight years, which feels like the length of time when a head might be getting itchy feet. Not so with Chris. He really does see his future at the school.**

He reflects that the pandemic had a significant impact on what he wanted to achieve and has changed his perspective. "I am still highly motivated in my role and there's lots still to achieve. There's much that is great about Felsted, but some things could be better."

He points to the current boarding provision as something that could be improved, as well as cementing the school's place within the global education scene.

"We strive to give a really good education with excellent results for students but boarding has changed a lot in the past 30 years as society has demanded that."

Gone are the days of full boarders making up the biggest slice of the school cohort. Out of 570 pupils in the senior school, although 430 are boarders, only 120 – about a fifth – are full boarders in the traditional sense.

"It reflects the needs and wants of society. Parents are far more involved in children's lives than they were three decades ago."

There are also quite different needs for children aged 17 to those joining the senior school at 13 years old.

"We need to create the right boarding environment for children to gain confidence when younger, but also have a setting that encourages independence and room for them to take responsibility as they get older."

Striking the right balance and working out the ideal boarding model is a key aim to making Felsted one of the best providers of boarding provision in the country. He believes that striving for a model that really works for students will leave Felsted well placed for the future.

Another area the school is looking to work hard at is sustainability and improving its carbon footprint. A key goal within this is conserving energy and reducing its use, which has become an even more pressing issue in the last 12 months.

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*"The starting point is the cultural and behavioural change throughout the school body..."*

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In April 2022, the school was looking at increased energy bills of about £1.5m a year. He said that the Government's support scheme has been helpful, but a recent announcement will see that support reined back.

In the meantime, energy costs have come down a bit. The school was on a long-term contract for gas, which had to be renegotiated, but are in the middle of a contract for electricity, meaning that it is slightly protected from the price hikes.

Even so, the huge increase in gas prices has sharpened the school's focus on reducing energy from both a cost saving point of view, but also to meet its new green agenda.

"We haven't set a target date for net zero. What we have done is launch a New Year's resolution for the school and wider community to look at every activity the school does through the lens of sustainability."

"That way we can try to ensure we are acting as sustainably as possible. We have had external companies come and assess the ways in which we can improve our carbon balance sheet."

"It is a challenge as we have a lot of old buildings and it is a complex set-up, so the advice is not to put a target date on becoming net zero, but to start working towards that objective," he adds.

Chris says it would be too easy to set a date, but almost impossible to achieve that, so it would be meaningless.

He adds the starting point is the cultural and behavioural change throughout the school body, reducing things like single-use plastics, printing, paper use, food waste and energy conservation.

Sometimes these will be simple changes, but a greater emphasis across the school can make a significant difference when all these measures are put together.

*"Striving for a model that really works for students will leave Felsted well placed for the future..."*



## “...what we need is a sustainable plan for sustainability”

“We are also starting some bigger schemes, such as a rewilding project to increase the biodiversity across the school,” he adds.

The school signed up with One Tribe in 2021, a company that creates and funds rainforest protection projects. When someone signs up to the school, we make a small donation to One Tribe that helps protect more trees. Since it began, One Tribe has protected 78 million trees and stored over seven million tonnes of carbon.

Another initiative will see the school conducting a traffic survey across the site to see whether it is possible to reduce the number of parental journeys in and out on a daily basis. The school will also examine its own travel, both global and domestic travel, so a cost benefit analysis will be conducted from an environmental point of view, to ensure the trip's benefit outweighs the environmental impact.

“On the domestic travel front, school sport trips will be examined. We sometimes travel long distances for sports fixtures, which are important for the students and their development.

“However, we are assessing whether we can align our fixtures better. For example, if we play Haileybury or Bishop's Stortford College the boys and girls can play the same day to reduce transport requirements a little, but also having the boys and girls playing together, gives a more collegiate experience.”

*“It's a question of being mindful, so we can reduce our footprint where we can...”*

The school will also examine the fixture list to see whether it can play more fixtures locally, avoiding long-distance travel.

He adds that the school doesn't want to reduce the quality of the fixture list, but that it needs to be considered with its environmental impact in mind.

Reducing the school's carbon footprint is already well under way in some areas, such as printing, where the pandemic was useful in fostering the adoption of home learning, helping reduce printing needs, something that has been continued.

These initiatives are also measurable, he says, a bit like food waste, where likewise, it is easy to see how well you are doing across the site.



“If you can measure it and see how well you're doing then it seems more tangible and worthwhile for the students. Adding a little competitive energy into the situation, such as making comparisons between this year's students and last year's can make a difference,” he adds.

On the big ticket items like fuel and heating, it is hard to make comparisons, because there are so many external factors involved, not least the weather. “We are not as confident we can set comparable metrics and demonstrate real change on these at the moment. We need to assess them over a longer period of time, although of course the urgency for change in this area is quite high.”

Across the school estate, buildings are the area the school can make the biggest impact. “We are keen that any new buildings are built with sustainable systems included.

“And we are looking into the older buildings and what we can do in terms of changing heating systems, upgrading insulation and making sure we have double glazing where we can,” Chris adds.

There are challenges though, particularly when you have many listed buildings. Due to the level of complexity, the school has brought in a third-party company called ReEnergise to conduct a thorough review.

Their advice seems sensible, Chris adds. “We will provide plans that are achievable, but also financially achievable too. It would be easy to spend millions updating the estate.

“What we need is a sustainable plan for sustainability. Something which we can achieve but will not bankrupt the school in the process of trying to achieve it.”

Another priority is to ensure that students leave Felsted with a thorough understanding of sustainability. They are the ones, he adds, who will drive the change in their careers that help tackle the global climate crisis.

“Green issues are definitely higher up the agenda for pupils, parents and the teaching body than they were even five years ago.

“The challenge is that even though everyone knows it's a good thing, actually changing your own behaviour can be quite difficult, that's where having a community really helps.

“If you are struggling to make changes yourself, but those around you are pushing you and prompting you to do so, you have a better chance of making those changes.

“One of the worries for young people is that this issue is so large that it can be quite overwhelming and that an individual can't do anything about it,” he adds.

However, it is the school's job to help students see that change can happen and global problems can be overcome. Take for example the ozone layer, Chris adds. It was only recently that the United Nations announced that the hole in the ozone layer might be recoverable.

“When I was at school, this was the biggest environmental challenge, so seeing progress in this area gives some hope.”

Chris adds that he believes the solution to the climate crisis is only partly behavioural.

“We will also need a technological solution. It is inspiring for me to think that Felsted could produce the next scientist, who makes a breakthrough that helps us resolve the problems we face,” he adds.

We are all inspired by that thought.



# OF leading the way in compassionate and sustainable fashion

*The fashion industry has a long way to go to achieve sustainability, but Anna Foster has created a fashion brand that puts the environment and compassion front-and-centre of its values. She shares her story with Imogen Gander*

**OF and fashion designer Anna Foster (n90-92) is on a mission and has two simple ambitions – to create new garments only from those that already exist and to persuade consumers to ditch disposable fashion and value the quality of their clothes more.**

In 2018, Anna set up E.L.V. DENIM in east London. In just five years, Anna, who is owner and creative director at E.L.V. DENIM is well on her way to achieving the first of her aims. She has developed an environmentally-friendly clothing brand that fully encapsulates the ethos of sustainability and compassion, producing new clothes and styles from used jeans that otherwise would have been destined for landfill.

Denim is the perfect material for upcycling – it is a fabric that was originally created to be hard-wearing and long-lasting. And so E.L.V. DENIM takes old pairs of discarded jeans and turns them into beautiful new trousers, skirts, jumpsuits and shirts.

Anna says that producing a new pair of jeans is one of the most environmentally exhaustive processes in the fashion industry, requiring as much water in the manufacturing process as the average person drinks in 13 years, or nearly 10,000 litres.

This figure is shocking, but when multiplied by the four billion pairs of jeans that are produced globally each year, the environmental toll becomes staggering.

It is this environmental impact that Anna aims to address through her brand, whilst also helping to stem the cycle of production, use, disposal and reselling that sees jeans and other garments transported across the world many times during their lifespan.

Recent “greenwashing” campaigns by big fashion brands have co-opted the word “sustainability” to give customers a false sense of security that their purchases are having a positive environmental impact.

However, Anna tells me that it is only small businesses, such as E.L.V. DENIM, which can

*“A new pair of jeans is one of the most environmentally exhaustive production processes in the fashion industry...”*



ensure environmentally and socially conscious practices at all stages of the production process are truly sustainable.

E.L.V. DENIM stands for East London Vintage, a testament to Anna’s aim to reduce the transcontinental transport usually involved in jean production, whilst also ensuring that skilled local manufacturers are paid fairly for their labour.

She cultivates close relationships with her manufacturers and encourages the government to support these talented UK-based workers, aiming to be a change-maker within the fashion industry.

Anna was awarded an Innovate UK grant from the UK’s Research and Innovation organisation in 2022, to create a sorting infrastructure so that E.L.V. DENIM doesn’t have to export its waste. It is also seeking to work with material scientists to be able to truly recycle denim into new denim.

E.L.V. DENIM’s brand transparency is important to Anna and she jokes that she constantly “attempts to disrupt the established status quo”.

Her brand tries to convey information about its manufacturers, processes and who it works with in a clear and easy to understand way.

“That’s important, so consumers are able to make an informed decision when making a purchase,” she says, adding that confusing messaging from a brand generally means they are trying to hide something.

Her small team regularly takes on interns during university placement years to educate future recruits of the fashion industry about the degree of sustainability that can be achieved, whilst still creating beautiful garments.

But like many small business owners, growing her business has not been easy. Anna tells me that E.L.V. DENIM was one of the first brands (and is the only denim brand) to 100% upcycle existing garments in this way.

Initially orders were through word of mouth, while Anna worked out of her living room. Since the brand was founded in 2018, it has grown from strength-to-strength, including twice winning awards from the British Fashion Council.

Anna works with influencers on inclusive sizing and is preparing to launch in America, Hong Kong and China this year.

E.L.V. DENIM now produces approximately 4,000 garments a year, which can be bought through other retailers or directly from the E.L.V. DENIM website. She only produces to order to ensure that there is no over-production or waste.

Her sustainable credentials have attracted interest from other manufacturing sectors too. Recently E.L.V. DENIM has collaborated with



**“...we need to return to a society that truly values textiles ... thereby reducing waste...”**

like-minded brands, such as Hyundai. The Korean carmaker wanted to repurpose the leather from car seats.

Anna is now branching out to create new garments, such as dresses from duvet covers obtained from luxury small hotels, or new shirts from old ones. E.L.V. DENIM is always open to donations, she says.

**“Anna wants to make it easy for her consumers to do the right thing...”**

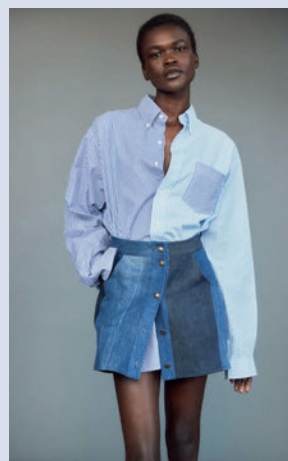
She hopes that by purchasing unique, special items, which through the nature of their production from existing garments means that no two new pieces are the same, that consumers will appreciate their uniqueness and treasure their purchases for many years.

It is a tough ambition to fulfil in the fashion industry as consumers change – their size fluctuates over time – but by using thoughtful design features, such as large seam allowances that allow for adjustment and creating timeless designs that will remain in style for decades, Anna is seeking to make it possible.

If customers feel as though they want to buy a different pair, E.L.V. DENIM works with Curate & Rotate who offer a peer-to-peer resale platform. She also works with Reskinned, a business that accepts old garments and resells them, awarding a voucher towards a new pair of E.L.V. DENIM jeans in return for not simply throwing them away.

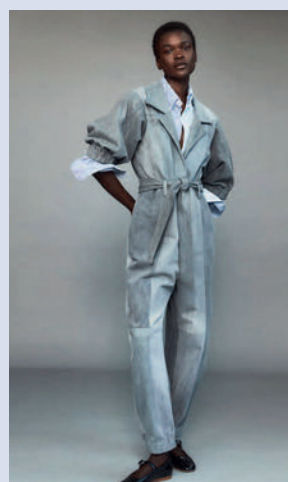
Anna wants to make it easy for her consumers to do the right thing when it comes to slowing down the relentless consumption of the fashion industry.

**“...keeping an item for longer can have a massive positive impact on the environment...”**



As part of this desire to have a lasting impact across the industry, Anna tells me that she wants to “change the mindset we have towards fashion, whether or not people purchase from E.L.V. DENIM”.

This is the second part of her ambition and arguable far more difficult to achieve, although in recent years, there has been a gradual shift in awareness of the environmental and human impact of the fashion industry. Anna hopes we will see a sea-change in consumer values, including a return to a society that truly values textiles and the craftsmanship that created each garment, thereby reducing waste.



Currently, skilled workers across the world are paid pitiful wages to ensure that high-street brands can sell their jeans cheaply, fuelling an environment in which consumers do not value the pieces they purchase, because they can simply replace them cheaply, says Anna.

I asked Anna whether the cost-of-living crisis would have an impact on her sales, as people with less disposable income might

buy from cheaper high-street stores.

Anna says that rather than focus on what people can afford, her goal is for people to value the items that they have, no matter how much they cost.

“It is necessary for consumers to take ownership and to be aware that keeping an item for longer, or not buying frivolously can have a massive positive impact on the environment.”

This is a mindset that Anna believes should be taught at a young age and would allow future generations to break the fast-fashion cycle that society is currently addicted to.

Anna knows first-hand the impact that the values learnt at school can have on an individual.

*Continued on page 14*



Continued from page 13

She tells me of her “creative awakening” when attending Felsted, stating that this experience profoundly changed the way that she viewed life, people and opportunities.

Not only did Anna make lifelong friends at Felsted but she credits the school with teaching her the importance of seeing value in every task and is always eager to learn or help, in any situation.

It was these valuable skills that carried her through her time at Exeter University, where she produced fashion shows and found avenues to express her creativity and break into the fashion industry.

She says to students reaching out into the world after school to not worry too much about the A levels they sat and whether they are relevant to the job they subsequently evolve into, instead reach for the career they love.

After university Anna worked as an assistant to a freelance fashion editor, then as a fashion director in her own right, travelling all over the world as part of a role she describes as an “intense, but amazing job”.

It was while doing this that Anna became aware of the importance of appreciating your current position in life, gaining intimate knowledge of the world, or business around you.

She tells me that she tries to see the positive in every situation, even though it might not have felt that way at the time and would urge everyone to do the same.

Anna’s value-driven outlook on life has carried her far, and I was impressed by how she aims to ensure that E.L.V. DENIM is part of the change that she wishes to see in the world and that she is unwilling to compromise her own beliefs or the vision of the business.

This manifests in her creativity when using all types of denim to create interesting, exciting new styles that make use of textiles that would otherwise go to waste and ensures that E.L.V. DENIM’s environmentally-conscious customers have pieces that they can be proud of, and are as unique as the person who wears them.

## Four OFs who tackle climate change discuss the challenges we face

*The climate change crisis we face is daunting and at times overwhelming. We talk to four OFs who have careers in the green sector and are pro-actively trying to make a difference in their work. Imogen Gander quizzes them*

■ **Ben Pratt (fe98-05)** is co-founder and managing director of Clearstone Energy, a leading independent developer of low carbon technologies in the UK. Clearstone was founded in 2016 and has since developed over 600 megawatts of energy projects, including battery energy storage systems and solar farms. Clearstone recently secured planning consent to develop a 50-megawatt solar farm near Felsted, a project which Ben hopes will engage and educate the local community about the importance of renewable energy.



**CLEARSTONE ENERGY**

Clearstone is currently also in the process of securing funding for a five-gigawatt pipeline of renewable energy projects.

■ **Sophie-Dorothe Lieke (tn13-15)** is researching a PhD in Sustainable Food Systems at the University of Göttingen, Germany. Sophie-Dorothe’s research involves collecting data from Germany and Indonesia to examine the consumer’s perception of palm oil in both importing and exporting nations, as well as encompassing all aspects of sustainability in food systems. Her work requires an understanding of the global nature of food production.



■ **Danielle Standish (nb08-12)** is a sustainability specialist at organic tea brand Pukka Herbs. She uses the knowledge she gained as an environmental policy economist in the Civil Service to ensure that Pukka’s carbon footprint per box of tea it produces is always reducing, even as their brand grows. This involves reducing the use of plastic in their packaging, working to limit the impact of farming and improving biodiversity.



■ **Bella Collins (fo3-06)** is managing director at Flexi-Hex, a start-up specialising in sustainable packaging. Their patented honeycomb sleeve made from biodegradable, recyclable tissue paper is perfect for protecting fragile objects of all shapes and sizes. Bella’s role as managing director involves helping to grow Flexi-Hex’s reach, as they work with companies to reduce waste and improve packing efficiency at all stages of the supply chain.





## “Everyone can do their bit ... think about the wider impact of your daily activities ...start with small, achievable goals...”

**How did you get into the green sector? Was this driven by a desire to work in an industry that actively seeks to reduce our carbon footprint?**

**BEN:** For my geography degree I undertook a dissertation on the effects of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef. This led to a MSc in Renewable Energy just as this sector was emerging in the UK. I have never found it difficult to find a job having worked in energy trading at EDF Energy and project development at Savills before setting up Clearstone Energy in 2016. It gives me great satisfaction to use my skillset to actively reduce our carbon footprint.

**SOPHIE-DOROTHE:** I have always had an interest in the environment, leaving school to study a biology degree, followed by a master's in environmental management, and now a PhD in sustainable food systems. My work focuses on all aspects of sustainability in our global food system, most specifically on the role of exporting and importing countries in the consumer use of palm oil. About a third of all greenhouse gases produced in the UK come from the food industry, and as such, this is a crucial aspect in our approach to climate change and net zero goals.

**DANIELLE:** Before working as a sustainability specialist for Pukka Herbs, I completed a degree in economics and politics, with a master's in environmental economics and climate change. My desire to work in sustainability was inspired by an amazing trip to Madagascar where I worked with a marine conservation organisation to monitor coral reef health. This experience highlighted first-hand the impact that climate change is already having on communities that rely on the ocean but have not had the opportunity to develop their technologies or way of life fast enough to outpace its negative effects. This trip made me realise that I wanted to have a career that made me part of the solution.

**BELLA:** I visited Haiti a few years ago with my mum and realised that nations across the world really struggle with recycling their waste. In the UK, we are simply blind to this problem because we are adept at collecting and exporting our waste. After this trip, I became fascinated in our use of resources, and knew that I wanted to move to a career more rooted in sustainability. I joined Flexi-Hex as part of their marketing team, and am now managing director, looking at how to grow the company and expand its impact.

**Having worked in the sector, are you still as passionate about helping to combat climate change, or more so?**

**SOPHIE-DOROTHE:** I think that the more that you know about such an enormous challenge, the more you realise the complexity of creating solutions, and it can be hard to always keep the passion alight. However, this is balanced by my appreciation of the wide scope of climate change research. I am motivated by the possibilities open to humanity to combat this problem, and hope to become a role model to others through the difference that I can make to the world.

**DANIELLE:** My commitment remains, and I am certainly still passionate. It can be quite scary to work in this field, and constantly think about such an overwhelming topic, so I make a conscious effort to also expose myself to positive news stories. I am a pragmatist and know that the best way to combat the climate crisis is to work together on multiple levels, targeting both the consequences and causes of climate change simultaneously. Once you are aware of the myriad of ways that we can all help to solve the problem, it becomes easier to have a positive outlook.

**BELLA:** It is amazing working within this sector and knowing just how many businesses are actively trying to bring about change. Flexi-Hex wants to help companies change their impact on the planet, at all stages of the supply chain, and it is so rewarding to see the results of my work, especially as our company's positive environment helps to prevent me from becoming overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge.

**BEN:** Absolutely. I enjoy the business aspect of my job and take pride in the larger purpose of my role. On the flipside however, it is hard sometimes to not become disheartened by inflexible attitudes towards the environment and our government's policy decisions, many of which lack support for action on climate change.

**What do you think the global community can do to achieve net zero and slow the warming of the planet?**

**DANIELLE:** We all need to take action as soon as possible, rather than just making commitments for the future. It is up to every person to take responsibility for their impact on the environment and not wait for someone else to find the solution. My work in Madagascar highlighted the need to tailor solutions to help those already impacted by climate change, and to appreciate that the negative effects will not be felt by all nations in the same way.

**BELLA:** This is a big question, with multiple answers. Real change has to come from large, global businesses, so it is necessary to pressure governments to compel these companies to re-evaluate their impact on the environment. As consumers and voters, we can all work together to implore those in power to take this problem more seriously.

**BEN:** The world needs to act fast to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. There have been some positive steps such as the existence of the COP summits and climate change targets set by nation states. However, there needs to be significantly more co-operation between countries to tackle this challenge. Industry already has the solutions - with renewable energy from hydro, wind and solar being the cheapest way to generate energy nearly anywhere on the planet - we just need policy support to allow us to implement them.

**SOPHIE-DOROTHE:** People are not homogeneous, and we need to bear this in mind. Achieving goals and big climate change solutions is not a one-size-fits-all problem, but the little things can make a difference. It is necessary to know and embrace the cultural and physical environment in each area and work to target

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## OF FEATURE

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the impacts of climate change in that community. Further, it is necessary to learn from others, and be willing to try many different solutions.

**We often feel helpless as individuals in the face of this challenge. What can each OF do to help save the planet and secure our future?**

**BELLA:** Don't be scared to just do a little bit. Often, we feel overwhelmed by the action that we could be taking and feel guilty for not achieving all of it. Instead, I urge people to make easy changes to their lifestyle that have a compounding effect, such as switching to reusable cotton pads, or refilling detergent instead of buying a new bottle. Making small, regular changes can really add up.

**BEN:** Everyone can do their bit and make impactful decisions. I recently purchased a house and chose a property that was energy efficient and used renewable technologies such as solar panels and a heat pump – small decisions that help the planet. I urge everyone to take small steps to change their behaviour: support renewable energy projects, lobby and vote for policies that will support such projects and think about the wider impact of your daily activities.

**SOPHIE-DOROTHE:** Between 2015-2022, the UK decreased emissions by 12% in relation to national food waste, demonstrating the big impact that household-level decisions can have. Being mindful of our own consumption can have a big impact, whilst also helping to save money. It is also possible to interrogate the environmental impact of the producers of your food, and to opt for ones with more conscious practices.

**DANIELLE:** There are many high-impact things that individuals can do quickly. My personal favourite is researching where your bank invests your money – many high-street banks support fossil fuel companies, and by moving your money to a provider with more conscious investment can have a big impact. This small action will allow you to feel empowered, without feeling overwhelmed. If you start small with achievable goals, you will be more likely to remain motivated and stick to your commitments.

## BURY POND REWILDING SCHEME AT HEART OF FELSTED'S BIODIVERSITY PLANS

*One of Felsted's recent sustainability initiatives offers students valuable educational opportunities as well as benefiting the environment. Katherine Farr tells Imogen Gander about the scheme*



**One of Felsted's oldest environments is set to be the focus on a new rewilding scheme that will be led by the school's head of biology Katherine Farr.**

Katherine, who joined the Common Room almost six years ago, has a deep interest in the natural world that stems from her love of biodiversity and animal sciences, a passion that will serve her well as she heads up a new scheme to rewild the Bury pond environment.



Once the scene of ice skating and hockey matches in the big freezes of the 1980s, this area will be handed back to nature – initially in a managed way – to boost biodiversity, but to also give valuable educational opportunities to students and staff.

Katherine explains the initiative has both short and long-term ambitions. "It will hopefully cultivate an increase in biodiversity around Felsted whilst also providing an opportunity for students and staff to

collect and analyse data concerning the local ecosystem."

Data collection will include a study of water quality, initial and continuing invertebrate, bird and mammal surveys, aerial shots of the changing landscape and an assessment of the site for endangered species.

Katherine hopes they will discover great crested newts as well as unusual dragonfly species. The assessments will be carried out over many years and will give a fascinating insight into how plant and animal diversity fluctuate between winter and summer months.

She also hopes the project will provide a perfect source of novel, unique data for students undertaking investigative work. This is a requirement of the International Baccalaureate's internal assessment that requires students to be involved with data collection.



Additionally, Katherine is keen to work with students at Felsted's Prep School to ensure the project's longevity, but also providing crucial learning opportunities about sustainability from a young age.

The rewilding process is a controlled way of allowing nature to take its course with minimal human involvement, says Katherine.

Firstly, the area will be cleared of invasive brambles and there will be an annual grass cut - in the wild this role would be played by larger herbivores such as goats and sheep.

Then her intention is to allow the environment to flourish and stabilise as niches develop for plant and wildlife species.

Longer-term she hopes the project will lead to more biodiversity in the area. Then she hopes the rewilding site can be expanded into wildlife corridors in and out of the school grounds, creating a visual representation of Felsted's commitment to sustainability.

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***“There has been significant engagement and enthusiasm from students of all ages...”***

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Beyond this Katherine would love to connect the school's sustainable projects with those taking place in the village, allowing a sharing of ideas and resources to create an eco-friendlier environment.

Any project of this scope comes with its challenges, especially as it will be time-consuming to collect the necessary data and ensure that the Bury pond is in the best shape to allow nature to thrive.

The first few years will require a lot of monitoring and appreciation of the delicate nature of a new ecosystem.

Katherine says one of the best aspects about the rewilding project is its far-reaching appeal to members of the Felsted community. Despite initially being nervous about the extent to which students would engage with the project, Katherine has been impressed by their positive response.

As well as liaising with other staff members who have ecology and scientific backgrounds to help refine the initiative, Katherine says she has had significant engagement and enthusiasm from students of all ages.

She is keen to note that Felsted's commitment to sustainability does not only apply to the rewilding project.

Katherine tells me of other initiatives that have stemmed from an across school student committee, named the student house sustainability representatives, which has proposed ideas such as car surveys to encourage car-pooling and a campaign to reduce printing to cut paper use.

The diverse nature of this committee ensures that all students can input ideas and witness some of the positive effects of Felsted's efforts to increase sustainability. This is important as many of the school's other sustainable endeavours are harder for students to witness, such as efforts to reduce food waste by the catering department.

Katherine praises these wide-reaching initiatives and comments on the need for individuals to be aware of the positive impact that even small changes in behaviour can have on the world around us.

“Every decision and behaviour can make a difference, even if it is something as small as deciding to use a mug rather than a disposable plastic coffee cup,” she adds.

Aware of the scale of the climate crisis and a need for large-scale change in our behaviour and approach to the environment, Katherine notes that we need to be patient with ourselves and take the time to rewire our thought processes.

“It may not be our natural instinct to choose the sustainable option, but even the smallest effort can pay off with significant positive consequences.”

Katherine hopes that her rewilding project, along with other Felsted initiatives, can teach students the valuable lesson that small changes now can have long-lasting impacts that affect our natural world for the better.

By being involved first-hand with a project such as the rewilding of the Bury pond students can see the direct impact of their personal efforts. This will give them an insight into the potential for global change if enough people wholeheartedly commit to protecting the environment, she says.

Katherine is a country girl at heart, despite her urban beginnings and being born in Stoke-on-Trent. At the age of seven, she moved to a small village in Essex and was thereafter surrounded by gardening, plants and farming.



Her passion for the countryside and horses was sparked by her move to Essex. “I remember taking a countryside management badge when I was a young guide and the examiner laughing as I was the only one who passed as I could identify all trees and wildflowers but still had the broadest Stoke accent.”

After leaving school, Katherine studied at the University of London's Wye College.

“I went to university in my early 20's and chose Wye in rural Kent because it was situated in a tiny village surrounded by fantastic hacking and woodland.

“I could take my horse with me and ride out early across the Kent downs before anyone was awake. On that basis offers from Leeds and Reading just did not feel right.”

After her degree in animal sciences, Katherine took an MSc in Medical Microbiology at the University of Surrey, before joining the department of environment and rural affairs as a scientific officer.

After a stint lecturing undergraduates and master's students in animal sciences at Writtle College in Essex, Katherine joined Felsted in 2017 and now heads up the exciting project to rewild the Bury pond area.

***“One of the best aspects of the scheme is its far-reaching appeal to members of the Felsted community...”***



# FACES AND PLACES

## ALL ABOARD THE PADDLE STEAMER FOR SOCIETY DINNER

On 9 June, the 118th OF Society Dinner took place aboard the *Elizabethan*, a beautiful replica of an 1890s stern-wheeled Mississippi paddle steamer with an open-top roof, for a Thames River cruise. It was a wonderful evening which started with a warm welcome from OF Society President Sarah Macdiarmid (née Rowledge m85-87) and Chairman Michael Yeatts (e76-81) and saw over 60 OFs celebrating the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



## CAMBRIDGE NETWORK SPRING LUNCH

On 28 April, 14 OFs attended the Cambridge Network spring lunch at the Seasons restaurant, Cambridge Regional College. The restaurant provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and supports training within the hospitality sector.

## OFs TAKE THE COURTAULD POLO TROPHY 2022

Congratulations to Will Hopkins (ac09-11), Claudia Seers (fmn01-15), Grant Polkinghorne (hc08-13), Ruby Smith (mn14-19) and Alex Rayner for winning The Courtauld Polo Trophy in another thrilling match against Old Stortfordians at Silver Leys Polo Club on 22 May, with a final score of 5-3. Many thanks to those of the Felsted community who went along to support the team's victory.

## ORGANISTS RE-UNITE TO PLAY CHAPEL'S ORGAN

Director of Music Will Warns hosted OFs Peter Mapley (fe69-78), Ken McCrea (fe57-67) and Robert Stokely (c83-88) at Felsted on 7 May for an informal organ recital. The organists enjoyed a special opportunity to play the three-manual Willis organ in the school's Chapel as well as to reminisce about Felsted in years gone by.





**FAMILY TENNIS DAY**

On 26 June, the annual Felsted family tennis day returned. Roslyn Marriott-Cox, director of tennis, hosted the event, which was attended by OFs, parents, staff and the wider Felsted community.



**SPARKLE SEVENS'S CHARITY RUGBY TOURNAMENT RETURNS**

After a two-year break it was a delight to see the Sparkle Sevens charity rugby tournament return to Felsted on 10 September. The event raised over £6,700 to help vulnerable children and communities in Malawi and saw eight out of the 12 teams having an association with Felsted. OF Harry Hitchcock (fhc02-14), who organises the teams, said: "It was amazing to once again bring together friends, teachers, colleagues and invitational players for a hugely worthy cause." With grateful thanks to Harry and to all those who played, volunteered, and came to support.



**2012 LEAVERS LONDON GET-TOGETHER**

A group of Felsted OFs, who had left the school 10 years ago, joined together for a drinks celebration in London Bridge. Over 20 alumni from the class of 2012 met up on 7 October thanks to Alexandra Keir (fmg98-12), who hosted the evening.



**CAMBRIDGE SUMMER GARDEN PARTY**

The annual Cambridge Network summer drinks party took place on 8 July with 30 OFs attending the drinks party in the beautiful Fellows' Garden at Jesus College, Cambridge.

**INNOVATIVE MARSHALL CENTRE FOR LEARNING OPENS**

OF Matthew Spacie MBE (d83-85), founder of Magic Bus one of the school's key partner charities, officially opened the multi-million pound 10-classroom building on 28 September. Many OFs and members of the Felsted community were in attendance.



**CAMBRIDGE NETWORK WINTER LUNCH**

Members of the Cambridge Network of OFs joined together for a magnificent lunch at Jesus College on 18 November. It was a great opportunity to catch up with friends, meet new faces, and enjoy a wonderful meal. With grateful thanks to OFs Nicholas Ray (g60-65), Edward Thackray (g60-63) and Edward Dodson (h77-82) for organising such a delightful event.





# Towering Eggleston leaves more than just co-ed legacy

by Nicholas Hinde

**Eras do not follow chronology and there is a case for saying that Tony Eggleston OBE (1968-1982) was Felsted’s first post WW2 headmaster.**

His predecessor, the revered and avuncular Henry Reekie, was in the Felsted Common Room from 1929-1945, years that encompassed the wartime evacuation to Herefordshire, returning as headmaster in 1951, after a torrid period for the school when a steadying hand at the helm was needed.

By the 1960s the war and its aftermath were well behind the country, revolution was widespread, and in 1968 Tony was appointed to Felsted from the headship of the English Schools in Nicosia in strife-torn Cyprus.

Apart from a similarity of height, he was in contrast to his predecessor. Tony was young, vital, thrusting, and full of ideas and energy. He wanted to get things done and was impatient of objections or opposition.

He was a disciple of the great reforming head of his time, John Dancy, who introduced girls to the sixth form at Marlborough. And so it was no great surprise when the governors and Tony announced that 12 girls would be admitted to the lower sixth in September 1970.

Cynics would claim this was an economic move – and there must be a commercial rationale for not excluding half of your potential customers – but Tony insisted he was responding to pressure from parents and OFs that the presence of girls would advantage the education of the boys, and add richness, depth and nuance to Felsted.

It was a tentative experiment, designed to be reversible, but the school has never looked back, and co-education stands as Eggleston’s most substantial legacy.

But there was far more to his era. He was a builder, adapter and re-purposer: the Sports Hall, the Reekie building, the Craft Centre, the Hunt Theatre as well as developments at the Prep School all took place under his lead.

He appointed an early pioneer of computing and the first professionally trained members of the PE department, a director of instrumental music, and a real economist to teach Economics.

He used appointments “to stir up the Common Room”. It must be said that several of the Eggleston years were golden for the academic, intellectual, and artistic achievements of the



cohorts, who in successful later life greatly valued him and held him in respect and affection.

Always mindful of the challenges of the future, Tony started the Friends of Felsted, primarily to fundraise but in a framework that allowed a wider constituency of those who held Felsted in affection to become involved.

Two other Eggleston initiatives must be noted. He introduced the self-service dining room and the Sixth Form Club, largely run by pupils, which fell victim to a later reform of the law.

Tony and his wife Jane were active beyond the immediate confines of the school. He encouraged the foundation of a local Arts Society branch and the Choral Society.

Tony had a great love of architecture and the Levant. “You must understand that in the Levant truth is relative” was one of his many lapidary pronouncements.

After he left Felsted in 1982 he returned there to head Champion College, Athens. From there he retired to Norwich and in widowhood lived in a sheltered flat in Bury St Edmunds where I occasionally visited. His son and family were nearby.

Tony Eggleston was a towering headmaster and holds a significant place in Felsted’s history. It is my personal regret that he, a builder, and an architecture lover who insisted on commissioning worthy buildings, does not have a building at Felsted School named after him.

**Anthony Eggleston OBE, 1928-2021**

## HENRY HICHENS

**Henry Hichens (c84-89) sadly died in January 2022, aged 51.**

Henry was an excellent golfer and played for the Old Felstedian Golf Society on several occasions, including in the Halford Hewitt.

Philip Graham (fb79-89), his long-term playing partner and captain of the OFGS, recalls a languid golfer with a lazy, effortless swing that encouraged the ball to gently rise, invariably finding its intended target with ease, he was graceful to watch.

Henry last played for the society at Thorndon Park GC, September 2021, when competing for the Mathews Trophy.

Philip adds: “It is this abiding memory I have of my mate Henners, smiling, laughing, joking, playing golf as he loved to do, the pressures of the world temporarily suspended, enjoying life for that special moment in time, may he rest in peace.”

**Henry Hichens, 13 January 1971 – 27 January 2022**



## MICHAEL SUGDEN

**Michael Sugden (teacher 1991-2013). Felsted modern languages teacher Michael Sugden died aged 63.**

He was a keen advocate of learning foreign languages arguing they were vital to an understanding of other cultures – and fun. He devoted the whole of his working life to teaching French and German at various independent schools, inspiring many to continue to study modern languages.



He went to Christ’s College, Cambridge in 1977 to study modern and medieval languages followed by a short-service commission with the army, serving with the Light Infantry in Hong Kong.

After completing his PGCE at UCL Institute of Education in London, he took his first teaching post at Sherborne School, Dorset, in 1982. He joined Felsted in 1991 serving until 2013. From 2014 he taught at Westminster School until he retired in 2018 – and then embarked on an Italian language course.

He is survived by his daughter, Poppy, from his marriage to Gill (née Brown), and by his sister, Joanna, his brothers, Jonathan and Mark, and a half-brother, Edward.



# Well-loved poet, writer and teacher Harry Guest dies aged 91

**Poet, writer and former Felsted teacher Harry Guest was born in Penarth, Glamorgan, the son of Walter, a tax inspector, and Elsie (née Bayly-Matthews), a homemaker.**

He was educated as a boarder at Malvern College, Worcestershire. He studied modern languages at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, graduating in 1954, and went on to postgraduate study at the Sorbonne, where he wrote a thesis on Mallarmé.

He taught at Felsted from 1955 to 1961 and then for five years at Lancing College, West Sussex, before moving to Japan in 1966 to become a lecturer in English at Yokohama National University. He returned to Britain in 1972 and was head of French at Exeter School until his retirement in 1991.

He was a published poet and writer. Apart from his many collections of poetry, he was also well known as a translator from the French and Japanese and has published several novels and non-fiction books including the *Traveller's Literary Companion to Japan* (1994) and *The Artist on the Artist* (2000).

His translations include selected poems of Victor Hugo, *The Distance*, *The Shadows* (2002) and *Post-War Japanese Poetry* (with Lynn Guest and Kajima Shōzō, 1972).

He lived in Exeter and was married to the historical novelist Lynn Guest. They had two children.

Henry Bayly Guest, 6 October 1932 – 20 March 2021

## Memory from a pupil by Michael Brewer (d59-63)

**Harry Guest taught modern languages at Felsted from 1955 until he left in summer 1961.**

He also served as assistant scoutmaster under the efficient eye of Chris Gregory. Unlike the latter, Mr Guest suffered fools gladly and that to a miserable new boy in the cold January term of 1959 was most welcome. Indeed, his warm and tolerant manner made one feel understood.

At scout camp on the wet Brecon Beacons, he was similarly silently sympathetic towards the boys who were enjoying themselves. The badge on his shirt was not the familiar Essex crest, but a pear

symbolising Worcestershire – an early talking point between us boys.

His published poem *The Private View* had 14 verses inspired by an art exhibition at Felsted and is still treasured by many of his former pupils, who have their autographed copies, touched and warmed by the poetry within.

Mr Guest's sensitivity could also be observed by the lesson in chapel. His forward leaning gait and long-open gown sleeves flapping down the aisle were rather memorable.

Thank you Harry Guest – the bringer of happiness.

## JERRY DEAKIN

**Jerry Deakin (g44-48) died peacefully in the Isle of Man on 16 September 2022 at the age of 91.**

Born in Loughborough, Leicestershire, in 1930, he was the former owner and chairman of the *Loughborough Echo* newspaper.

His grandfather, Joseph Deakin started the newspaper in 1891 and when his father Arthur Deakin retired, Jerry who had qualified as a printer, took over the firm. As well as running the newspaper he developed the commercial arm of the *Echo*, printing for major London shows including *The Mousetrapp* and those by D'Oyly Carte.

Jerry was well known in Loughborough. Being a member of the Toastmasters Club from 1963-1970, in his final year he was the president, and during his 20-year membership of the Loughborough Rotary



Club he was the president twice, in 1982 and 1990.

He enjoyed amateur dramatics and was a member of the Festival Players from 1957-1967, taking on acting and stage manager roles.

Jerry enjoyed sport, swimming, cycling, sailing and petanque. He played rugby for Loughborough RFC from 1953-1967 and was captain for the 2nd XV and was a member of Quorn and then

Loughborough Tennis Clubs.

After a career of over 40 years Jerry retired in 1996, he and his wife Christine left their home in Swithland and travelled in their motorhome to Spain before settling in the Isle of Man.

During his retirement he and Christine have taken their yacht to Spain via the French canals and sailed in Scandinavia. In latter years he and Christine had taken cruises around the world.

Jerry leaves behind his wife Christine, children Rachel and Andrew and two grandchildren.

**We sadly report the following deaths notified to us in 2022**



- ARCHER, Martyn Alexander Clive (g49-53)
- BANNISTER, Christopher David (fh89-97)
- BENNISON, Wilfred (f64-67)
- BOREHAM, Douglas Richard (fd51-58)
- BURLEIGH, Michael Ernest (fe48-56)
- CHATTERTON, Roger Henry (b51-55)
- CRIPPS, Christopher Anthony (c55-59)
- DEAKIN, Jerry David (g44-48)
- FINCH, Ian Drummond (fd46-55)
- GAZE, John Elliot (e57-61)
- CHARLES, David Morier Gwyther (b52-57)
- GOADBY, Christopher Michael (fe48-58)
- GRIFFITHS, John 'Barry' (g46-51)
- HICHENS, Henry David Lancaster (c84-89)
- HILL, John Rendel (b46-50)
- HUMBY, John Austen (fd38-44)
- HUTCHISON, David Alexander Creighton (g38-42)
- KAYSER, Christopher Jean-Paul (hc18-20)
- KENRICK, Dr Jeremy Martin Tyrrell (e61-66)
- KENT, Simon (fc82-90)
- KING, Denis Frederick Wright (fg33-43)
- MARSDEN, Peter Nicholas (g46-50)
- MOLLER, David (c47-54)
- MORRIS, Neil Humphrey Pilgrim (b50-55)
- NICHOLLS, David Heathcote (a58-63)
- NORTHEN, Robin Richard (b49-53)
- PEACOCK, Stuart Clive (a53-58)
- PEARSON, Arthur Neale (b47-52)
- PREBBLE, Capt Alan Humphrey (fa33-42)
- QUAYLE, Charles (h65-70)
- RADFORD, John William (g56-60)
- ROED, Jan Petter (g45-50)
- ROWE, Patrick John (fd51-59)
- SAINT, Nicholas Wakelin (c48-53)
- SAINT, Stafford Anthony (c48-52)
- SECCOMBE, Colonel Thomas CBE (c48-52)
- SIMONS, David Kenneth Shearman (c53-57)
- STACEY, John William (c49-53)
- TAYLOR, Hugh Ian (b59-64)
- TOMLINS, Richard Howell (c52-57)

### Former Staff

- CLARK, Frances (1984-1996)
- CULL, Roger (1978-1986)
- DAWKINS, Olivia (1990-2020)
- EGGLESTON, Anthony Francis (1968-1982)
- GUEST, Harry (1945-1961)
- GRANLUND, Gilly
- MULLARKY, Hugh (1983-1985)
- RANYARD, Kenneth (1987-2000)
- SUGDEN, Michael J A (1991-2013)

### Felsted Community

LAWRENCE, Diana

To view online, please visit  
[www.felsted.org/ofs/obituaries](http://www.felsted.org/ofs/obituaries)



# Record-breaking OF Rice dies peacefully at home in Felsted

by Craig Rice (b80-85)

**Algy Rice (g50-55) was a widely respected Old Felstedian, who was a regular on the touchline, or peering over his garden wall to watch the cricket on the Front.**

Algy was born in Birmingham with his family moving to Chelmsford in 1949, joining Felsted in 1950. He was an exceptional all-rounder throughout his time at Felsted and held several school sporting records, which survive to this day.

He was a school prefect and head of Follyfield, as well as being the senior sergeant in the combined cadet force.

In sport he represented the school in rugby and athletics and was captain of squash. He excelled at hockey, and he is still the only Felstedian to have scored six goals from open play for the 1st XI. Derek Pringle also managed six, but they included short corners.

His cricketing exploits were entered in the cricketing bible *Wisden* when he took nine wickets for 11 runs for the Felsted 1st XI versus the 40 club. He missed the opportunity to take the final wicket because the Essex captain, Tom Pierce, had been opening a new pavilion in Romford and the game was declared over by the time he had arrived to play. That record has never been beaten.

On leaving school Algy was enlisted for National Service and commissioned into the Royal Marines. Based in Poole, he was deployed with *HMS Striker* for the Suez operation in 1956.

Demobbed in 1957 he had a gap year laying oil pipelines in Libya, before being accepted by Jesus College, Cambridge to read law. Algy threw himself into Cambridge life, thoroughly enjoying sport and



the social life, but perhaps forsaking his studies somewhat. He was subsequently caught in what he always termed the 'great Purge of '59', being sent down for failing his first-year law exams.

Following a short stint working the pipelines in Canada he secured a place at Trinity College Dublin, reading Law. The Trinity cricket side won the Irish Senior Cup three years in a row with Algy skipping the team in 1962. He was selected to represent the Ireland cricket team on a tour to the West Indies

but reluctantly had to decline due to his final law exams. Algy also represented Trinity at golf, hockey and squash. Later, Algy was a regular for the Felsted Robins.

Moving back to Essex, Algy started a career with ShellMex BP before becoming a stockbroker, first with Tustain L'Estrange and latterly with Fiske and Co.

He played golf for the OF Halford Hewitt side and went on to become president of the OF Golf Society, thoroughly enjoying following the team in the Hewitt.

Algy had two children, Julie (m1981-1983) and Craig (b1980-1985), from his first marriage to Wendy, both of whom were educated at Felsted. In August 1989 he married Diana and settled into Roslyn House in the centre of Felsted, which fortuitously backed onto the Front.



School Rugby XV – 1953



School Hockey XI – 1954

## SIMON KENT

**Simon 'Baz' Kent (fc82-90) passed away in December 2022, aged just 50 years old.**

A successful businessman, father of two Felstedians and friend to many OFs, Simon died suddenly having recovered from major heart surgery in the summer.

Simon joined the senior school at Felsted in 1985 and quickly became known as Baz, due to Sue Townsend's coming of age literary sensation *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 and ¾*. The book was at the height of its popularity when Simon started at Felsted and was essential reading for pubescent teenagers starting out at senior school.

One of the characters in the book is called Barry Kent, it didn't take long for Simon to become known as Barry, which in true Essex style was shortened to Baz.

After Felsted, Simon travelled with fellow OFs Russ Traynor (d85-90) and James Tyrie (c85-90), before joining his father's insurance firm.

He had a love of fast cars, gaming, entertaining friends and nature. Two OFs, James Tyrie and William Griggs (b85-90), read moving eulogies at his funeral at the Old Park Meadow Natural Burial Ground, near Dunmow, which was attended by many OFs.

He is survived by his wife Nicola and their two children Olivia and Ruben, both at Felsted.

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He was a regular in the Chequers, and the Compasses at Little Green, enjoying a fantastically happy social life in his retirement and was fortunate to have a wide network of friends, many of whom were associated with the school.

**Alastair L G Rice, 12 June 1936 – 3 January 2023**



# GOLF SOCIETY WELCOMES RETURN OF BACK-TO-NORMAL COMPETITIVE CALENDAR

*After two years of reduced activity the Old Felstedian Golf Society was able to return to some sort of normality in 2022. As a result the society had a most enjoyable year, writes golf president Stuart Mott*

## Two years of pandemic-related upheaval had severely disrupted the society's normal competitive golfing calendar.

In 2021, the Halford Hewitt was played in early September, in 2022, it was able to return to its normal April slot and the OFGS's golfers had a fantastic week.

Charlie Wilcox's team took on a strong Edinburgh Academicals side in the first round. In a tight contest, featuring some excellent golf, we narrowly lost 3½ to 1½, with Will Dunn and Charlie Duke winning their match convincingly.

## OFGS FIXTURES 2023

### FEBRUARY

- 25 Spring meeting at Aldeburgh Golf Club.  
Organiser Tim Hedin

### MARCH/APRIL

- 30-2 The Halford Hewitt at Royal St George's and Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club.  
Organisers Phil Graham and Charlie Wilcox

### MAY

- 14 Grafton Morrish qualifier at Gog Magog Golf Club. Organisers Phil Graham and Tom Copnell
- 31 Summer meeting at West Sussex Golf Club.  
Organiser Oliver Stocken

### JUNE

- 5-8 Putting competition at Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. Organiser Mike Rath
- 16-17 Match against Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club. Organiser William Doe
- 28-30 Mellin, Burles and Millard Trophies at West Hill Golf Club. Organiser Tim Chetwood

### SEPTEMBER

- 24 Mathews Cup, Essex Public Schools scratch foursomes at Thorndon Park Golf Club.  
Organisers Phil Graham and Jon Regan

### OCTOBER

- 6-8 Grafton Morrish finals at Royal West Norfolk and Hunstanton Golf Club.  
Organisers Phil Graham and Tom Copnell

If you'd like to play in any of these fixtures, please email the Development Office at [ofs@felsted.org](mailto:ofs@felsted.org)

A strong showing in the Princes Plate saw us reach the quarter finals where we lost out to The Leys. We welcomed Joe and Jack Buttleman to our Hewitt side for the first time, and hope to see more of them in future years.

In the senior events Tim Chetwood, as ever, organised our efforts for the Mellin and the Burles Salvagers with great skill. We were without a couple of regular players in the Mellin side and succumbed to Shrewsbury in the second round.

However, our Burles side was victorious, winning the trophy for the second time in three years, this was a great achievement. The top pair of Ted Dunn and Maurice Meyer (making his debut) were unbeaten. Whilst the other pairing of Tim Chetwood and Sandy Dunlop also won every match and, in so doing, stretched their unbeaten run to four years.

The Mathews Cup foursomes took place at the end of September. Our side, led by OFGS skipper Phil Graham, finished in third place.

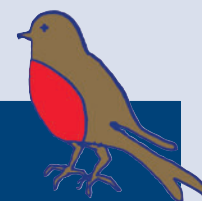
In June Will Doe kindly put a side together for our wonderful trip to Deal. For the first time we played this match for a trophy, The Challis Chalice, and a close contest finished with honours even at 6-6.

The lifting of Covid restrictions allowed our society days to resume. There were victories for Kevin Palmer (handicap) and Mike Rath (scratch) at Aldeburgh. Cosmo Pain was a serial winner in the other events, picking up the trophies at Pulborough, Chelmsford and Gosfield Lakes.

Our thanks go to Tim Hedin, Oliver Stocken and Dudley Simpson for organising these days.

A special mention goes to our captain Phil Graham, who does so much for our society both on and off the course.

It was good to be back.



## FELSTED ROBINS FIXTURES 2023

### JUNE

- 11 Cricketer Cup 1st Round v Stow Templars
- 25 Cricketer Cup 2nd Round - TBC
- 30 Felsted School & AGM at 10.30 am in Felsted Pavilion - Felsted.  
Match manager Nick Phillips

### JULY

- 9 Cricketer Cup 3rd Round - TBC
- 10 MCC - Felsted - 11.30 am  
Match manager Bertie Blackwell
- 12 Gents of Essex - Felsted - 6 pm  
Match manager Geoff Westbrook
- 13 Plough Boys - Felsted - 6 pm  
Match manager Ed Hutley
- 17 High Roding - Felsted - 6 pm  
Match manager TBC
- 19 Stebbing - Felsted - 6 pm  
Match manager Joe Burslem
- 23 Cricketer Cup Semi-Final TBC  
Refreshers - Felsted - 1 pm  
Match manager Will Devitt
- 26 Forty Club - Felsted - 2.30 pm  
Match manager Nigel Gadsby

### AUGUST

- 6 Mounts CC - Felsted - 1.30 pm  
Match manager Anthony Pheloung
- 16-17 Cricketer Cup final - Arundel Castle





## CHEVS LEADS FELSTED'S QUIET RUGBY REVOLUTION AND HE HASN'T FINISHED YET

*Felsted's director of rugby Andrew Le Chevalier has turned the school into a hotbed of rugby talent with several OFs forging professional rugby careers. James Garner finds out how he has transformed the school's reputation*

**Andrew, you've been at Felsted for 13 years having previously been a professional rugby player. In your time at the school, how many Felsted students have you coached to professional rugby careers?**

I have had the pleasure of supporting 13 OFs turn professional with currently six at Saracens, three at Northampton Saints, one at London Irish, one at Richmond and two in Hong Kong. As well as those playing professionally many others have gone on to play National 1 League rugby which is a breeding ground for many promising professionals, and some more have represented their universities at 1st XV level.

**Wow that really is quite an achievement... What do you put the school's success in rugby down to? In my day (30 years ago), it was more of a hockey and cricket school.**

I agree it was known as a hockey and cricket school but over the years Felsted has had a reputation for being a leading rugby school. What do I put it down to: Hard work as I had to change the tradition. I felt that working with the senior teams, especially the 1st XV which many people use as the benchmark for success, and then developing our homegrown talent from the Prep School. It's important to spend as much time on both parts of the school as ultimately you need to have a strong set-up from the bottom upwards. I also wanted to make the boys feel proud of the shirt that they put on as well as build a strong team ethos - looking after your teammate on and off the field. When I first arrived at Felsted my role was to coach in the Senior School but after a few weeks, I managed to get over to the Prep School, as I knew that if I could develop our players at a younger age and educate them in the Felsted brand of rugby, soon we would have a strong core of players coming through the school challenging the older players along the way.

**How about you? You played professional rugby for how long and with whom? Was it hard to leave the pro game and become a teacher?**

I started at Harlequins where I had my first experience of men's senior rugby and then moved to Wasps for the majority of my professional career. After that, I went to Swansea when they were transitioning to become The Ospreys. After that I was then lucky enough to move to France and play for Grenoble in the Top 14 which is the equivalent of our Premiership. When I moved back to England I went into a



player-coaching role for Henley in the Championship which was the start of my coaching career. I was lead forward and scrum coach and part of my role was mentoring younger players from Wasps in their transition to professional rugby. I was then asked to join Ealing Trailfinders also in the Championship to do a similar role as I was doing at Henley.

Yes, it was incredibly hard leaving professional rugby behind and embarking on a new career and working in a new environment. As you can imagine moving into an educational establishment is completely different to what I have been used to for most of my life. I missed the day-to-day buzz of rugby training, playing and travelling all over the world doing something that I loved, and being part of a close-knit family.

**What made you join Felsted?**

I was contacted by an old school friend Neill Stannard who was coaching the 1st XV along with Charlie Knightley. He asked me to come to Felsted to deliver some coaching sessions and what started as a few sessions a week quickly became a full term's worth of coaching. I thoroughly enjoyed coaching and off the back of this, I was offered the position of director of rugby.

**What do you find the most rewarding aspect about your job, both coaching rugby and being a housemaster of Mont's?**

As a housemaster, it is knowing that every boy in the house looks forward to school and especially looks forward to coming into Mont's. I like to know that the boys feel they can relax in the house, feel supported and that my door is always open for them no matter what. As the director of rugby, it's seeing the boys come off the field with big smiles on their faces having enjoyed playing for their team.

**Given the school is now an established rugby hothouse... What do you do next to continue to maintain its newfound reputation?**

I believe we need to keep developing rugby. I have worked hard to build a strong reputation but we need to look into investing not only in offering bursaries to promising professional rugby players but also in the sports facilities. I believe if we offer something different this would make Felsted more attractive than our competition. I would like to see us offer high-performance training and a holistic programme on-and-off the field. For this, we would need a structured strength-and-conditioning programme, nutritional advice and medical support from 1st XV down and Prep School up. In time we would develop a strong offering of Felsted home grown rugby players.

**Max Malins (fhc02-15) is back in the England squad for the Six Nations. How was it to see one of your pupils pull on the England shirt? Is producing international players what you strive for, or is it to produce players that can make a living through rugby?**

Honestly, it was amazing to see Max get the recognition he deserves. All coaches want to see their players achieve their potential and to achieve international honours is one of the best achievements possible. However, to receive messages from ex-1st XV players, or others who never made it to that level, to say they are still playing and enjoying the sport is as rewarding.

**What is it in your view about rugby that makes the game so special?**

The bond that is built between players knowing that the person either side of you has your back. The respect and discipline the players have for the referee is amazing and certainly separates rugby from other sports. Teamwork and accountability are key.

**What is the most important principle for your coaching style?**

Sam Bryan (dc15-20) 1st XV and 1st VII captain in 2019-2020 said to me that a good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are. I feel my coaching style is about developing the individual so that they are fully equipped. I believe that being myself is important, we listen to each other, and the players and I have amazing trust and connection with each other.

**Where were you when Johnny Wilkinson kicked England to victory in the Rugby World Cup final in 2003?**

I'm sure I am only one of a handful of professional rugby players at the time not watching the final. My wife had booked a surprise weekend away in Paris not realising that this would clash with the World Cup final. I remember it well as I was in a clothes shop listening to the French radio commentator getting extremely excited as Jonny Wilkinson was preparing to dropkick the winning points for England.

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