

HOUSE

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2024

THE WINCHESTER HOUSE SCHOOL ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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Front Cover:


Mimi Pearson-Gee aka Ladybyrd.

Image by Still Moving Media



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WELCOME FROM THE HEAD

Antonia Lee

Welcome to issue 16 of HOUSE magazine.

As a member of the Winchester House community, you know only too well the importance we place on developing a child's confidence through performance. Whether it be at a low-key, evening music recital, breathing life into prose in the poetry competition, singing at the fiercely contested House Shout, or facing a packed Hall at a School production, developing confidence through the performing arts is key. This academic year, I am proud to say that 60 children achieved success in musical instrument/singing ABRSM exams, and in LAMDA (Speech and Drama examinations), 91% of pupils achieved a Distinction, 9% a Merit with no passes or fails. These skill sets are shored up by a strong academic ethos, with Jane Newman's English Department's focus on creative writing and poetry recital riding a high, with the children's work recognised at national level in the 'Poetry by Heart' and '500 Words' competitions. Our poetry and prose also contributed to Winchester House being crowned National Champions in the Da Vinci Academic Decathlon and we are off to the World Finals of this prestigious competition in the autumn.

Employing experts in their fields remains key to success, and we are reaping the rewards from the appointment of Sam Bradshaw as Head of Drama. My brief to Sam was simple; please can we have a full throated, West End style musical that will bring the house down at the end of the first year to mark his arrival? Sam duly obliged and we were treated to an outstanding production of 'Little Shop of Horrors' which saw the children's lighting, directing, acting, singing, and dancing skills hit new highs, and the enormous, man-eating prop 'Audrey II' gobble up a Year 7 child! Who could ask for more?

We are about to ask for more. The Hall needs a well overdue face lift as little has changed since it was first opened in 1969. The launch of our 'Raising the Curtain' fundraising campaign, headed up by Charlie Clare, aims to raise £200,000 which will ensure our young performers benefit from state-of-the-art sound systems, lighting and stage craft, and the audience will enjoy more comfortable seating. We look forward to sharing news of our fundraising journey with you over the months ahead.

Without further ado, I welcome you to the pages of HOUSE magazine, which appropriately focus on the careers of Housians who place their success firmly at the feet of a Winchester House education and developing strong performing arts skills from an early age. As they say, "take it away."

Antonia



The opening of the Hall in 1969.

Alumni emails

I have promised the Editor, Emma McGowan, to mention a small but vital piece of housekeeping. Our new alumni database has the particularly unhelpful tendency of delivering emails straight into a recipients' junk/spam folder. To help us to remain in contact, could I urge you to look in your junk/spam folder, find a WHS email and open it? This action will, I am told, enable future emails to go straight into your inbox (and make Emma a particularly happy person)!



RAISING THE CURTAIN

By Charlie Clare
Head of Prep School Fundraising

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself to the Housian Community and I am delighted to have taken on the role of Fundraising for Winchester House to help ensure the School can further develop and continue to thrive. Having grown up locally, I have known Winchester House all my life and I am thrilled to now be a part of the team. I know that the Housian community is strong, with a huge sense of pride and connection with the School and I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months and years.

Now is an exciting time for Winchester House. Its partnership with Stowe has enabled us to look forward strategically and assess the very best developments for the School to ensure its future growth. An initial funding of £2 million from the new Stowe Group is being invested in an overhaul of boarding to ensure that boarding places at the School remain an attractive option and to help grow the numbers of pupils in the School. This remodelling of boarding will bring both boys and

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girls' boarding houses into the Manor House, separated by renovated House Parents' accommodation, ensuring that all boarders benefit from living with the charms of the Manor House's history, architecture and internal layout.

classrooms, freeing up extra capacity in Bradshaw and creating a gradual flow through the School, from Bradshaw to Drayton and onwards to Seligman before heading into the Upper School.

There are many other areas where recent funding has improved essential, but less obvious, areas of School life.

Moving the girls' boarding into the Manor House, along with renovated House Parents' and matron's accommodation, also provides an opportunity for the School to repurpose the Drayton Building into much needed classrooms. The Bradshaw (Pre-Prep school) is oversubscribed and short of space. As such, Drayton will create new



Investment has improved both fire regulations and security on the site and upgraded the swimming pool. Additional budget for maintenance and grounds-keeping now ensures that the site looks its best for those living and working at the School as well as prospective parents who visit.

Whilst capital investment from the School's resources is fundamental to its development, Winchester House has also always benefited from the kind and generous support of the Housian community. Key areas of the current facilities of Winchester House – the astro pitches, the Sports Hall and the Seligman, to name just a few – were only realised thanks to charitable donations and community support.

The Upper Quad area needs significant improvement, and I am delighted to announce that we launched a community wide fundraising campaign – 'Raising the Curtain' – in January to renovate the technical aspects of the Hall, to enhance the dramatic and musical performances, educational talks, assemblies, exams and plethora of other events that are held there. Old Housians Phil Harvey (CEO of Coldplay), Diana Magnay (Sky News' Moscow Correspondent) and Henry Hereford (actor) pre-recorded an interview with Antonia Lee recounting their memories of the Hall and starring in *Oliver Twist* in 1989. The recording was shown at the launch event – alongside the world premiere of Housian Mimi Pearson-Gee's (aka Ladybyrd) latest album – and went down a storm. We were also delighted to receive a message of support from rock star Rod Stewart and Penny Lancaster – friends of Deputy Head Andre Beukes – who kick started the fundraising with a donation of £1,000.

We are so grateful to all Housians and parents who have donated and are delighted to announce that we have raised over half of our target of £200,000. We would be thrilled to



receive your support at any level and will be acknowledging donations over £500 with a named seating plate, and contributions of £1,000 and above appearing on the Hall Donor Board.

Whilst facilities are important to all schools, their value is not truly realised without bursaries providing life changing opportunities for talented and deserving children. Winchester House is already providing substantial and fully funded support for children for whom being at Winchester House is the best option, both academically and pastorally. Our fundraising efforts will always balance the need for facilities with the determination to ensure those facilities provide benefits for children from a wide range of financial backgrounds. So, whilst you may hear me regularly talking about the Hall renovation, this in no way diminishes the School's determination to increase the funds available to support bursary places.

If you would like to help support our fundraising missions in any way, please contact me, Charlie Clare, and I would be delighted to share further information and Gift Aid opportunities with you.

charlie.clare@winchester-house.org
cclare@stowe.co.uk or call 01280 818326



FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC

Interview with singer-
songwriter Mimi Pearson-Gee
aka Ladybyrd



Those lucky enough to attend a WHS Music Concert with Mimi Pearson-Gee (2009–2016) singing at the piano will not be surprised to read that on leaving Stowe in 2021, Mimi decided to pursue a singing career in the music industry. Emma McGowan caught up with Mimi to find out more.

How did it all begin?

My dad is a Vicar and so I have grown up immersed in modern church music and learnt song structure from a young age. My parents always encouraged me and my siblings – Jemima and Theo – to play musical instruments, and I thrived off the opportunities provided to me at Winchester House by the Music Department with Mrs Chatfield, Mr Phillips, Mr Hamel, Mrs Thurman and Miss Lear. I particularly loved writing songs and specifically remember performing one I wrote for Mrs Chatfield's Christmas Music Competition.

After leaving Winchester House, I went to Stowe School with a Roxburgh Scholarship (much helped by my musical ambitions) and continued to write songs and perform at the piano or with my guitar. After my GCSEs, without my knowledge, an old friend sent a demo of a song I wrote to a music producer who liked what he heard and asked for more. I sent a further 30 songs and was signed to his

label. After finishing my A-levels, I flew to Antigua in July 2021 to write and record; I love the songwriting and the production process, creating music around an unusual title or soundscape and developing the melody and the lyrics alongside. I am heavily influenced by many artists such as Lana Del Rey and Taylor Swift, as well as film composers like Hans Zimmer. I am also a fan of poetry which I try to weave into my work.

In Antigua I decided to make my artist name 'Ladybyrd' as it was the nickname my grandfather gave to my mum, and what she called me sometimes when I was much younger.

Tell us about your music?

I released my debut single 'Too Close to Call' in May 2022 with 'Stolen Sunlight' following in the July, 'Oblivious' in September' and my EP* 'Sub Zero' in November.

I love the songwriting and the production process, creating music around an unusual title or soundscape and developing the melody and the lyrics alongside.

'Sub Zero' was the first song I co-wrote after leaving school and it sparked something in me creatively which led to many more songs. It is about the journey of finding courage to leave a relationship that has gone cold, and explores the complex emotions of desire, regret, and realisation. I was partly inspired by C.S. Lewis' 'Narnia' to write this; the friendship between Edmund and the White Witch which seems promising at first but leads to danger. Since the release of my EP and earlier singles in 2022/23, I have found my sound and written more music that is more personal to me. I'm writing stronger songs every day, and have been writing an album that I truly love. In the past, I have released songs that I wasn't very happy with, largely in terms of the production, but now that I am independent I will not be doing that again!

What is your favourite song?

It is hard to choose! 'Oblivious' used to be my favourite song as it is darker and edgier than my previous work. Also, I will always love my debut single 'Too Close to Call' which I released in May 2022 which immediately grabbed the attention of BBC Introducing. In January 2024, I released a single called 'Way Back Home', which is quite different to my previous work. It is much more cinematic with a rocky/pop edge, and it represents where my music is heading. I've since released my latest single 'Open Cage' which expresses the darker side of my signature cinematic sound. Overall though, I would say that my favourite songs are yet to be released... but they are coming soon.

Where have you been gigging?

I have done gigs at The Clapham Grand, at St John's College May Ball, many venues in Shoreditch and Camden, and in February 2023 I toured in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Durham, and London performing my EP. I have also played at a 'BBC Music Introducing' gig and supported the chart-topping Tom Speight at the Islington Assembly Hall, which was an amazing experience.

Have you become a pro at networking?

I'm a real networker now and email as many people as possible and see what happens. During a month in LA, I ended up meeting with the legendary film score composer Harry Gregson-Williams (of Shrek, Narnia, X-Men, Chicken Run and Flushed Away fame). Harry invited me to his studio and gave me advice on my songs and orchestration. I had to pinch myself as I grew up listening to his scores, especially the Chronicles of Narnia. The experience was hugely inspiring. I had a chance meeting with Tom Cruise and, after chatting about film scores and my music, he put me in touch with Mission Impossible's soundtrack composer for whom I've just finished recording vocals for a song on a TV soundtrack he's composing!

Your media presence is impressive, please tell me more...

My social media presence is growing, with more people discovering me. On TikTok some of my posts have gone viral, reaching over 200,000 views. The media has been so supportive of me with 'Clash Magazine' featuring 'Too Close to Call' as Track of the Day, and 'Notion' and 'Wonderland' magazines interviewing me. I was 'BBC Music Introducing



Beds, Herts & Bucks' 'One to Watch' which was cool, and they've been so supportive and played all my songs on air. I was also featured in the Sunday Times Culture as 'Breaking Act'. On Spotify I currently have 29k monthly listens and have been placed on a Spotify editorial playlist. I've had over 430,000 streams on my songs Spotify alone, which is encouraging, although I feel like it's just the beginning. I find creating content for social media a challenge sometimes, especially when I am balancing my time with other commitments to university and work, but I am definitely getting better at it and I really love developing a community there.

What does the future hold?

I am in my second year at King's College London studying History and International Relations and am loving it. I am also working in Parliament part-time, but music remains my number one priority. I have just shot the cover for HATC magazine, I'm booking more live performances and I'm excited to be releasing my debut album at the beginning of 2025.

*EP stands for "extended play" and refers to a collection of music larger than a single and smaller than a full-length album.



FROM NICKLEODEON TO NETFLIX

By Actor Henry Hereford (1984–1988)



Top: Henry in the ABC sketch comedy *Wham Bam* – “The Sheetles”

Above: Henry in *Happily Divorced* with Joan Collins
Left: Henry and his wife Katerina Tornari at the London premiere of *Luther: The Fallen Sun*. (©Getty Images)

My first acting experience was at WHS, when I played The Widow Corny in ‘Oliver Twist’. It was quite the star-studded cast, with Phil Harvey as Bill Sykes and Diana Magnay as Nancy. I then went to Radley College where I would be in school plays from almost the moment I started. Significantly I was part of the cast of ‘One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s nest’ which was invited to perform at the Edinburgh Festival, and that experience cemented my passion to pursue a career as an actor. At university I spent my holidays working on the other side of the business for both a casting director and an agent. It was very important for me to understand the mechanics of the business before I went further. Despite working for a very difficult casting director, the agent I worked for really mentored me and I began applying for drama schools as soon as I finished my degree. I ended up training at Drama Studio London and, after graduating, I worked in London and Australia where most of my work consisted of short films, some minor television roles, and

theatre before I ended up in Los Angeles where I began cutting my teeth acting on screen.

My first job in the United States was on the Nickelodeon show ‘True Jackson VP’ and this was shortly followed by a role in ‘The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo’ working with director David Fincher who remains one of my favourite directors. I went on to work on several television shows including the Vampire series ‘True Blood’ before getting cast in Pirate show ‘Crossbones’ alongside John Malkovich, Claire Foy, and Richard Coyle. What I’m most proud of is that I went out to Puerto Rico to play a character that only appeared in the early episodes before being poisoned, but I made such an impression on the showrunner Neil Cross and the wider team that I was then offered the role of Lord Somerile, aka The Wildman, that would continue to the end of the series. I had to look completely unrecognisable, and this took almost two hours to achieve every day and as a result, I became



As an acting coach, I work with clients on a 1-2-1 basis on their auditions but also on their careers. My own experience gives me a unique insight into the actor's psyche, and I see myself more as a facilitator rather than a teacher when it comes to opening their eyes to the possibilities.

very close to the hair and make-up department, who were the most talented and wonderful team. Less than 1% of actors have played multiple roles in the same season of the same show, and I am honoured to be part of that group. Afterwards, I returned to Australia to perform in multiple sketches in the hit comedy 'Wham Bam Thank you Ma'am' for ABC. In 2021, I won Best Actor for my role of Dr Dudley Allen in the multi-award-winning short film 'Last Chance of Evil' in Los Angeles.

I have started to combine a career as a producer and a screen acting coach. I was a co-producer on the Oscar nominated film 'To Leslie' and Andrea Riseborough's surprise Best Actress nomination proved to be an inspiration to the independent film world. It showed that a small film with a limited budget could still break through; it was an incredible experience to be part of this unique and powerful true story.

As an acting coach, I work with clients on a 1-2-1 basis on their auditions, but also on their careers. My own experience gives me a unique insight into the actor's psyche, and I see myself more as a facilitator rather than a teacher when it comes to opening their eyes to the possibilities. I have clients who are working as regulars on television shows and at the National Theatre. Over the last few years, I've been working in schools providing screen workshops to students who

have shown an interest in screen acting. It has been no easy feat as drama teachers seem very resistant to 'outsiders' coming in. It has sometimes been incredibly frustrating, in some ways harder than getting an acting job, but I have been lucky enough to have found some very open minded and receptive teachers in Victoria Buse of Radley College and Adam Cross of Harrow. At both schools I have provided both one off audition practice and on-going workshops which have been hugely successful. I have also worked with students at Radley and Cranleigh on scholarships and drama school entry. It has been hugely rewarding to see students who are mainly working in theatre thrive when they have the chance to be coached on camera. I am hoping more Heads of Drama will create a pathway for more guest lecturers to come direct from the trenches to share their knowledge with the next generation of screen actors.

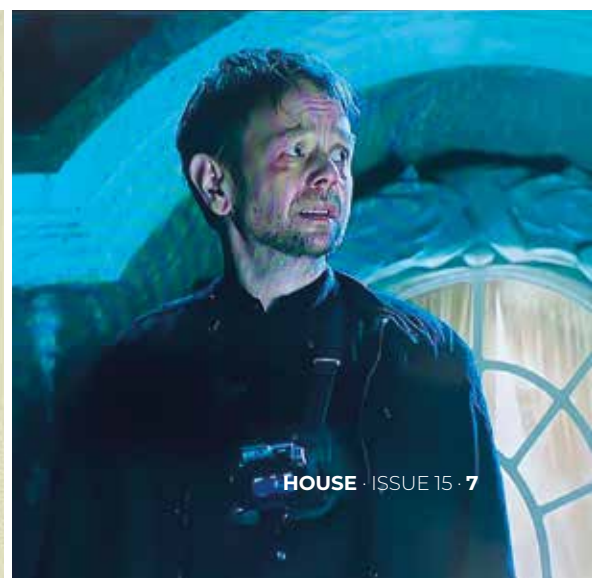
I am currently teaching screen acting at Drama Studio London to BA, MA and MFA students, as well as continuing my acting career, and have recently starred as Brian Lee in the Netflix #1 film 'Luther: The Fallen Sun'.

Top: The Wildman in Crossbones for NBC

Below left: Dr Dudley Allen – Best Actor award in the short film 'Half Chance of Evil'

Below centre: Official poster for 'To Leslie', co-produced by Henry

Below right: Brian Lee in Luther: The Fallen Sun





PRACTISE ANY ART TO EXPERIENCE BECOMING

By Jack Firoozan (2002–2012)

I'm very grateful to Emma McGowan and WHS for asking me to contribute to this year's edition of HOUSE. It's a critical and wonderful document in so many ways. More than anything, I have always enjoyed the life, activity and achievements with which it teems, and the promise it can afford all WHS pupils. It's a privilege to be able to share a short chronicle of my progression within the arts, starting at WHS, all the way through to conservatoire training and the start of another 'New Adventure' in the acting industry. In keeping the alumni family connected and engaged each year, fond memories of school resurface amid a busy world, and I am reminded of how lucky I was to be able to foster my love for the dramatic arts during my time here. It goes without saying that each journey through education is unique, and WHS, through its endless extracurricular offerings, led me to theatre and music. This wonderful school and its phenomenal teachers are to thank for that, so, thank you.

Having completed drama school in London two years ago, I maintained to my peers throughout that my locus of love for theatre belongs to the first play I ever performed in: The Wizard of Oz. It was Year 3, and I can categorically say, I had

no clue what I was doing. At seven years old, I was awestruck by the colours of our set in the Hall, the costumes, the face paint, and that towering proscenium, under which a very small me felt both lost and enchanted by an imaginary world. I was grateful in my role as The Cowardly Lion to be able to hide behind a tree for the first half of my opening scene. Between an adrenalinising stage fright, the blinding heat of stage lights, and the magic of suspended belief, I became hooked on theatre. It contained all life. The cast and crew became family, related by a love for entertainment, and a strong valuation of the maxims, lessons, heartbreak and laughter found in cherished tales, old and new. The fear The Cowardly Lion had to overcome, in order that he might redeem himself, was a fear that I also shared as I stood behind that tree. Looking back 18 years ago, that lesson has been the bedrock of my belief in the value of the theatrical arts; an imagination alive is a person alive.

WHS had an exceptional availability for progression in theatre and music. Starting with The Wizard of Oz, I was able to hop on that track of progression. Speech and Drama, LAMDA examinations, Shakespeare plays, The

Poetry Competition, The Year 8 Revue, and countless other opportunities led me to finish WHS with an insatiable appetite to not let this new found love of writing and performing theatre end. As such, I decided to apply for an acting scholarship to my next school, Harrow. Through innumerable monologue rehearsals in Drayton with my Speech and Drama teacher Mrs Leach, coupled with the ever-sage counsel of Mr Gillam and Mrs Farrow, I was able to obtain an acting scholarship to secondary school.



There's something inherently brave about performance in theatre and the arts. I wrestled with this at Harrow School, Durham University and The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. That's not to say a play equates to running into a battlefield, but stage fright wouldn't exist if there wasn't something dangerous about theatre. There are multiple reasons why, perhaps, but university and drama school showed me that self-consciousness is likely responsible for most of them. At Durham, this manifested in pressuring

Here, I was able to refine my skills as a performer and continue discovering the truths that dramatic arts can impart. The opportunities and resources available were unlike anything I had witnessed. Once more, I could lose myself in a 300-seat auditorium, a wardrobe department spanning three floors, House plays, School plays, writing competitions, field-leading beaks and masters (teachers), and dramaturgical workshops with alumni in the profession. I was immensely grateful to be afforded the space to engage with new kinds of theatre and to begin writing some of my own. It also gave me the freedom to fall flat on my face; perhaps the most important part of being a performer in theatrical arts. It's strange to say, but to learn anything about yourself, or the characters you play, you have to take risks. Engaging, exciting theatre takes risks. It is by no means easy, but it garners respect for yourself and others like nothing else. I remember how terrified I was of singing at WHS, and while theatre and film hold the principal places in my heart, I've also started pursuing music. If anyone had told me I'd end up doing this 15 years ago, I'd have laughed them out the room. Yet today I smile remembering Annie Chatfield telling my mum, 'There's a singer in every child.' The arts are the arena for you to live and exercise your imagination, and WHS embraces this wholeheartedly. Seize this arena; wrestle with it; enjoy it; learn from it; crucially, be grateful for it.

myself into giving 'cool', or 'good' performances to my peers, and at drama school I was quickly told that this is 'the Actor Brain'. I, the actor, had to stop thinking about what I was doing, or even delivering a good performance. It simply caused worry. Instead, you had to *be* the character you were playing, completely. You have to lose yourself in the role, just how I lost myself in the Assembly Hall at 7 years old.

As my education in drama ends and the frontier to professional work beckons, I hope I can impart a couple of small suggestions and encouragements to pupils at WHS that my adventure has taught me so far. The first would be to take advantage of what WHS has to offer. You will rarely find opportunities like you do at school to express yourself artistically and learn about yourself and others. There is nothing I am happier to have done than to have taken that first leap into the unknown 18 years ago. Your wonderful teachers will guide you expertly, and the facilities are there for you to use, so don't let the chance go to waste. The sky is truly the limit. The second, and last, is to be brave, believe in yourself, and take value in what you have to express. Foster your curiosity like there's no tomorrow; it's what makes us human. I read a letter recently by an American novelist, Kurt Vonnegut, who articulated this in a much more profound way than I ever could, and so I will leave you with it. Writing to a young class of Xavier High School art students in New York, he said the following: "Practise any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money or fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow... Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula... You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow."

With love,
Jack



*Jack Firoozan, Hamlet,
The Ryan Theatre, 2017*

Interview with
Chef Starzie Brown

MASTERCHEF: THE PROFESSIONAL



MasterChef: The Professionals returned to BBC One on 5th November 2022 for its 15th series, with judges Marcus Wareing, Gregg Wallace and Anna Haugh putting 32 professional chefs through their paces in the kitchen over six intensive weeks. Housian Anastasia Brown (2004–2008), known as Starzie to friends and family, took the MasterChef kitchen by storm making it through to the semi-finals. Emma McGowan caught up with Starzie shortly after the semi-final.

What made you enter MasterChef: The Professionals?

I had been a chef for less than six years and just as I was starting to find my feet in the industry, covid struck and I was furloughed for a year. I was out of work in the weeks running up to Christmas 2021 and was kicking my heels a bit when my friend Dan Lee, who I knew from working at the Peligoni Club in Greece and who won the competition in 2021, suggested I apply to MasterChef. I had lost some confidence in my abilities during furlough and decided to apply to re-engage and push myself out of my comfort zone, and was called for an interview in March 2022. I attended a total of 10 interviews and had to supply catering references going back five years. At no stage was I asked to cook! In early summer, I was told I had a place on the show but was asked not to tell anyone which was very tough as I was incredibly excited.

Where did your love of cooking stem from?

Food was a large part of my life whilst growing up. My Mum, Emma, is a great cook and always cooked meals from scratch and would insist we sit down as a family. During the university holidays, I would chef in private villas and at the Peligoni Club in the summer, head out to Verbier during the winter holidays and do ad hoc catering jobs at the weekends. On leaving university, I completed a one-year diploma course at Leith's School of Food and Wine in London where I learnt about classic flavour combinations and honed my French

cooking techniques. My first professional cheffing job was at Petersham Nurseries Café in Richmond for five months, before moving onto Chez Bruce and The Grill at the Dorchester and then as a Junior Sous Chef at JP Morgan in London which brings a quite different pressure to working in restaurants.

You were a great sportswoman whilst at WHS, tell us more...

I loved sport at Winchester House, playing in all the teams, and did gymnastics to a high level outside school.

Suzanne Gray, the then Head of Girls' Games, comments: *"Starzie was a wonderful sportswoman. She was Captain of Netball and Cross Country and gained her full colours in all sports. She set a record in the U14 100m in 13.3 seconds in 2008. Starzie went on to Tudor Hall with a Sports Scholarship. She was also a very accomplished gymnast and I used to love watching her perform. She was one of my loveliest boarding girls."*

Tell us about being on set at MasterChef?

Although you only see the judges on set, they are incredibly friendly, genuinely want you to do well and give great advice; Anna in particular whispered hints and tips. The production team Shine TV ran a very slick, fun set and we were supported by Plank PR when it came to media enquiries.

What next?

Appearing on MasterChef has led to lots of job offers; however, I am keen one day to start my own private bespoke catering business and have done my first wedding, which was rewarding.

Instagram: [anastasiabrownchef](#)

Suzanne Gray presented Starzie with the Victrix Ludorum Cup and is photographed with parents Emma and Hugo and brother Ben.



HOUSIAN NEWS

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

The Classic Car Show, organised by Martin Roberts, was a resounding success with over 40 vehicles of all ages on display throughout the School grounds.



RICHARD SPEIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Four WHS Heads, Housians as well as former parents, staff and governors gathered in St Peter's Church on 17th June 2023 to celebrate the life of former pupil and Headmaster Richard Speight (Housian from 1947–1953 and Headmaster from 1967–1997). We were delighted to welcome Richard's sister and former staff member Sheila Macintosh and her son Patrick to the service and afternoon tea on the Third Form Lawn. WHS Governor Richard Greaves said in his address, "Richard Speight was a legend who shaped WHS into the School it is today. We shall always be grateful for the lifelong service Richard gave to WHS."



TOBY THAME

Toby (2011–2017) was selected for the World Cup England U20 squad and played Ireland on 24th June 2023 drawing 34:34 and played Fiji on 29th June winning 53:7.



BRUCE DE WITT

We were delighted to welcome Housian Bruce DeWitt (1985–1989) to WHS in June 2023. Bruce was thrilled to see his name appear in the 1988–1989 yearbook, in the original School register and to revisit the start of the 100m.



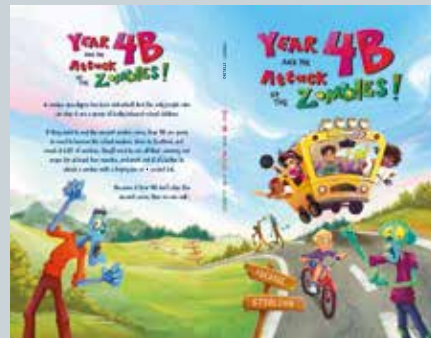
MARY DAVIES

We were thrilled to show former Catering Manager Mary Davies around WHS. Mary joined WHS in 1963 and enjoyed revisiting the kitchen and dining rooms. On telling our kitchen staff that she used to make a highly popular pudding called 'Dead Man's Arm', Mary was delighted when chef Lewis De Haan produced the original tin!



FREDDIE SANDILANDS

Freddie (1990–1996) loved reading and writing stories as a child, so when he began working as a primary school teacher, he found himself writing stories for the children in his class, including the children as characters in the book, and taking them on wild and wonderful adventures through reading. His stories proved extremely popular with the children, and he recently published his first children's book 'Year 4B and the Attack of the Zombies!'



SF MEIKLE TAMBOUR CHEST

Whilst Head of Science from 2008 to 2015, Mick Thompson ran Environmental Science with Year 4 and decided to make bug hotels. Joined by Mark Keating, the pair set off for the wood pile at the back of the pavilion and found a tambour chest that was in poor condition but far too good to be turned into bug accommodation. Michael commandeered it and intended to restore it back to some sort of usefulness but the chest sat in his workshop for a decade. On retiring last year, Michael set about a sympathetic restoration and, on taking it apart, noticed that the name S F MEIKLE had been burned onto the back. Stuart Meikle was a pupil in 1915 when WHS was based in Deal, Kent and went on to become Headmaster in 1930, and it is thought Stuart would have made the chest whilst a pupil in Deal. The tambour (once in Marilynn Hunter's office) has now been returned to the Reading Room by Mick for all to admire.





UNLEASHING CREATIVITY THROUGH **STEAM**

By James Martin, Deputy Head Academic at Winchester House School

At Winchester House, our vision is clear. We teach the future, nurture ambition, grow potential and change the world, one pupil at a time. STEAM education, with its focus on science, technology, engineering, art and maths, is vital to this strategy. We teach creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills across these disciplines, so that our pupils are ready for the challenges and opportunities of the future ahead.

It is impossible to say what the job market of 10, 15 or 20 years in the future will look like, but our approach to learning helps pupils leave for the next stage of their education with the skills necessary to flourish in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

We teach the sciences individually with subject specialists in dedicated laboratories. With a strong practical

focus that encourages learning through discovery, our curriculum develops scientific skills that enable pupils to understand the world around them and allows them to analyse data to draw conclusions and make informed decisions based on evidence and observation. Pupils benefit from whole class 'in lab' teaching as well as from individual and group work outside of the classroom. As part of The

Stowe Group, pupils are also able to access the exceptional science facilities at Stowe.

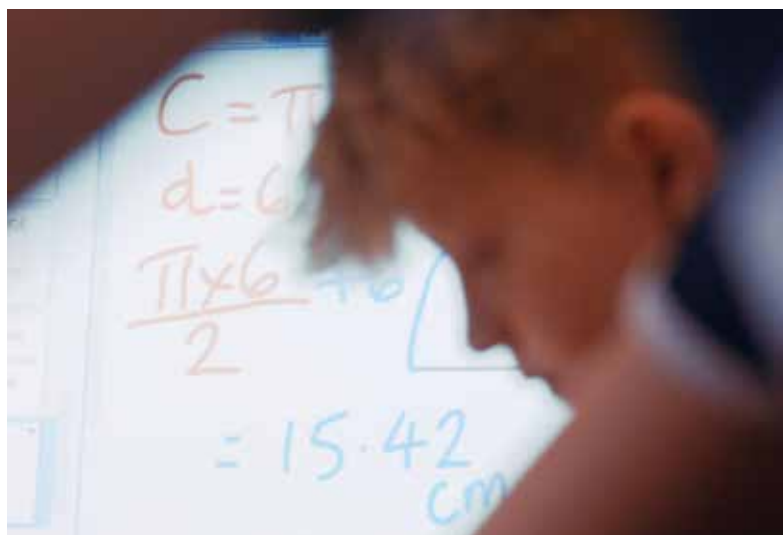
In Design and Technology, the curriculum covers a comprehensive design and make process, instilling problem-solving abilities from an early age. Pupils are encouraged to think creatively, pushing boundaries, and exploring innovative approaches. To support their ideas, we offer access to cutting-edge technologies, including a 3D printer, virtual reality headsets

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and laser cutter. This technology allows pupils to bring their designs to life, and these hands-on learning experiences with modern processes help prepare the pupils for the technological challenges of the future. Recognising the importance of creativity, close links are maintained with Art which is a platform for self-expression and critical thinking. Taught by professional artists in our dedicated art studio, the curriculum covers a wide range of genres and styles, from pottery to fashion design. Our approach helps Winchester House pupils develop technical and creative skills, both as individuals and as part of a group.



Our Maths curriculum aims to instil a real love for the subject, providing pupils with a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Through a mastery approach, pupils develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills, empowering them to comprehend the underlying principles and, importantly, be able to apply them in real-life situations.



Our approach to learning proudly aligns with the Change Maker vision of The Stowe Group, embodying the commitment to shaping individuals equipped to thrive in a world characterised by constant transformation. At the core of this alignment are the six Change Maker skills that form the foundation of our educational philosophy. Through STEAM education, Winchester House cultivates Active Learning, where curiosity is the catalyst for knowledge acquisition. Communication & Technology skills are honed through collaborative projects and the integration of cutting-edge technologies, preparing our pupils for the digital age. Emotional Intelligence is not just taught but lived, creating a community that values empathy and understanding. Analytical Thinking becomes second nature as our pupils engage in problem-solving across diverse disciplines. Creativity & Innovation are not just encouraged but celebrated, ensuring our pupils become fearless innovators. Leadership & Social Literacy, essential for navigating an interconnected world, are ingrained in every aspect of our curriculum.



As we navigate the uncharted waters of the future, one thing is certain – the world will demand thinkers who can adapt, creators who can innovate, and problem solvers who can defy convention. This is the Winchester House STEAM experience, where tradition meets innovation, and every pupil has the opportunity to acquire skills that will not only withstand the test of time but also help shape tomorrow's world.





Pre the world of teaching, my first job was working in a petrol station in New Malden. I then looked after two Belgian sheepdogs in Belsize Park, before going to UCL to study Anthropology. At university, various jobs I had included hiring out deckchairs in London's Royal Parks, taking part in clinical drug tests right next to Smithfield market (did I get the placebo, or not...?), and cleaning houses in Tufnell Park. After university I travelled to Pakistan, and also worked in a school in Lahore for eight months. On my return to London, I was a cycle despatch rider for six months as well as a 'play centre assistant', before deciding to train in Bristol as a primary school teacher. I worked for two years in two Bristol primary schools, before heading to Kenya to join the independent sector. I taught at Kenton College in Nairobi for eight lovely years. When I returned from Kenya complete with my wife and two children, I had a teaching job in Taunton for one year, before the Head of Maths opportunity came up at Winchester House. With my side of the family all being in or near London, it was an opportunity to be closer to them, and we were very happy to move to Brackley. Both our children went through Winchester House from the Pre-Prep up to Year 8, and both received a great education and have made friends whom they still see and spend time with.

When I first joined WHS in September 2000, I was Head of Maths and continued to do that for 20 years, taught maths to Years 5 to 8 inclusive and did that until September 2023 when I became part time so I only teach Years 7 and 8 now, coached games for 21 years and was also involved in the boarding houses. My family and I lived on site until 2016, and I did one evening duty a week in the boarding house, plus a twice or thrice a term weekend duty with the full boarders. All teaching staff had to do one lock up every week or so, and I still remember sensing a ghostly vibe on the stairs leading to what is now the ICT room. I was also a Year 5 tutor for 16 years before moving to heady heights of Year 8 tutoring. I became the Exams Officer in 2008.

WHS has changed in many ways since 2000. When you're within an organisation you move and adapt with the changes in the workplace and forget 'how things used to be'. But changes that I can pick out are; different staff (I'm on my fourth headteacher, but I'm still not the longest serving member of staff), a slightly more diverse parent body, no Saturday school or Sunday duties anymore, a wider range of subjects fitted into the school day that can't physically get any longer, the year groups had different names e.g. Year

5 were the Removes, Year 6 were the 5th Form, very few mobile phones were held by staff when I started although there was the Number 1 phone manned by those of us in 'middle management' (now disbanded) on a one day a week basis, the rise and rise of email traffic and the Seligman building didn't exist.

What extracurricular activities and events have you been involved in? World Challenge trips – aka 'Learn to Lead' – to the Lake District including ascending Scafell Pike with staff and children carrying their own tents/food/Trangia cookers up to Sprinkling Tarn. As well as expeditions to Buxton, Steane Park, Cornbury Woods, Llangatock and the Wye Valley as well as boarders' trips at the weekends and the Year 8 fantastique trips to France avec Mme White et ses copains.

What are your happiest, funniest, stand alone and most extraordinary moments? I loved the rugby coaching and refereeing and remember some fine matches. Initially I coached the Colts B team (the U11 second team made up of both Year 5 and 6 boys) and we had some great victories against the Dragon, Caldicott, Bedford, to name a few. When the Year 5s and Year 6s were separated for rugby, I was again blessed with some great teams, in particular the team of 2016 who played exceptional rugby at such a young age. Performing in staff revues was great fun, as were the staff parties afterwards! Playing in the staff band (on the congas...) was very enjoyable, particularly when we accompanied school musicals. Other fond and memorable moments include: dinners, bbqs and socials on site with colleagues who also lived on site; lots of swimming in the school pool with family and friends; the support and generosity of some parents; the pleasantness, hard work and humility of some children, going down the drive on my children's tiny bicycles, Joe the Border

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Terrier harassing our guinea pigs in our garden, snow days when the boarders and anyone who could get into school would have massive snowball fights on the school pitches, coaching the 3rd XI hockey team to play hockey rather than being agricultural in their approach to moving the ball around a soggy grass pitch, being allowed to give up coaching cricket so I could coach rounders teams with the girls (and knowing the rounders rules better than many of the opposition umpires who were sometimes slightly perturbed that I knew the rules better than them), Section Suppers and rather wild games in the Dining Hall, reading stories (predominantly by Paul Jennings) to Year 5 children over many years, winning the WHS 'How do you solve a problem like Maria?' staff competition (I sang 'Edelweiss' and got everyone to join in, just like in the film), helping arrange and then taking part in the London to Brighton British Heart Foundation bike ride in 2007 with a team made up of teachers and teachers' partners or children, 'Spring Forward, Fall Back' and all my very glamorous assistants over the years and playing some of my favourite tracks as the children came in for assembly and when they left (e.g. Isaac Hayes, Elvis Costello, Orchestra Baobab, the Specials, Gregory Isaacs, David Bowie, Pulp).

My most recent highlight has to be winding up (twice a week) the school clock and getting it to chime once again on the hour, every hour despite some initial in-house opposition, and of course my many colleagues, both past and present, and too many to mention individually, both teachers and non-teachers. I've always found the relationship between teaching staff and non-teaching staff at Winchester House to be mutually respectful and kind.

Finally, I hope that whether it's been through maths, rugby, rounders, hockey, expeditions, French trips, Year 5 or Year 8 tutoring, Classic Film clubs, chess clubs, inter-house times tables and divisions tests etc that I have managed to have a positive and constructive influence on the many, many students (and parents) that I have had direct contact with since September 2000.

Thank you, Winchester House, for paying me a salary for nearly 24 years, and providing me and my family with a lovely place to live and be.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERGE ZVEGINTZOV (1946–1949)



Born on 11th May 1937, Serge was one of a remarkable string of scholars sent to Winchester College by Headmaster Mr Hayman, where he was Sergeant of the CCF Singles Platoon. In National Service (subject to government suspicion as an untrustworthy man with Russian ancestry), Serge moved from the Royal Signals to the Intelligence Corps where, once trained, he was sent to the same section of The War Office Military Intelligence Divisions as the playwright Dennis Potter. From there, he became Battalion Interpreter of the 1st Battalion XX Lancashire Fusiliers in Cyprus. Serge was subsequently commissioned into the Intelligence Corps, Territorial Army.

After New College, Oxford, Serge worked for one year at Brookes School, Massachusetts. On returning home, he joined the then Consett Iron Company as a Production Management Trainee, subsequently becoming a Production Studies Officer. Serge then trained at the Cranfield Work Study School and worked for three years as Technical Officer in the Head Office of the then ICI. He returned to Cranfield on the staff body (by then a university) and spent the rest of his career there. This included a year as Visiting Associate Professor at the Indiana University School of Business in Bloomington, USA, and latterly as Senior Lecturer in Management Studies at the then Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham.

Serge married Caroline Alison Mills on the 9th and 10th of September 1967 (CoE and Orthodox weddings respectively) and had two daughters,

Catherine and Anna. He died on 15th June 2021.

*Written by Serge's brother Nicholas
(1948–1952)*

JOHN ANGUS CHAMBERS (1948–1953)



Angus Chambers passed away on 20th January 2022 at the age of 82. Angus was a passionate WHS old boy and advocate for WHS, rarely absent from old boys' dinners. Angus counted his years at Winchester House as among the happiest of his life and was delighted when several of the masters who had taught him (including Rev Davies and Dick Vernon) were still going strong when his sons Roy (1988–1993) and Nick (1990–1995) attended the school. In later life Angus, a retired farmer and corn merchant, gave speeches at alumni dinners and proudly paid for the fox weathervane to be replaced on the Upper Lodge. Angus was a member of the Non Nobis Solum Society and kindly left a legacy for WHS in his will which was gratefully received and will be put to good use.

CHRIS REES

Chris Rees, husband of Maria and parent of Housians Tom, Sam and Izzy (who attended WHS from 2000–2016), was born on 20th December 1966 in Melk, Austria and died on 6th March 2022 in Oxfordshire. Chris was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, a blood cancer, in December 2008. He then spent the next thirteen years living every day like it was his last. His energy, optimism, good humour and love were infectious, leaving a lasting memory on all those he met. He was, and continues to be, an inspiration to



all who were fortunate enough to know him, reminding us all that even in the most challenging circumstances there is happiness to be found every day for those who are brave enough to take it.

NIKKI ATKINSON



Nikki Atkinson, our much-loved Games Teacher and Equestrian Manager from 2005 to 2022, lost her short and incredibly brave fight with cancer on the 2nd July 2022. The whole School community was deeply saddened and shocked by the loss of such an energetic, talented, sporty, fun-loving, and dedicated teacher and friend, and gathered at WHS with Nikki's partner Mike Loggin and mother Ingrid on 15th September 2022 to remember her at a Service of Thanksgiving, and to plant a rose in her memory. The Atkinson Cup has been created in Nikki's memory and is presented annually to the WHS pupil who shows great endeavours in equestrianism.



TONY LEWIN (1952–1956)

Tony Lewin attended WHS from 1952 to 1956 and afterwards moved to New House at Oundle School and shone on the sports field, particularly in rugby and cricket. After leaving Oundle in 1961 Tony read Geography at Oxford University where he gained two blues for rugby. After graduating, he returned to Oundle as a staff member in 1966. Together with his wife Stella, he was a dedicated member of staff and made a significant contribution to School life including teaching geography, coaching the first fifteen, as a Games Coordinator and as Housemaster of Sidney from 1986–1990. He died on 11th January 2023.

OLIVER STRONG 16th January 1993 – 5th March 2024

The family of Oliver would like to announce the sad passing of their eldest son at the age of 31 years. He was a great lover of life and much enjoyed his time at Winchester House from 2004 to 2006. From his prep school, Oliver went to Bromsgrove School and then completed an Economics degree at the University of Exeter. Oliver became a Chartered Accountant with Price Waterhouse Coopers, latterly in the Sustainability Dept, and was a very special person who worked hard, but had a great sense of fun and was much loved. May he rest in peace.



ELLIE FLETCHER AND HECTOR LOWE

On 3rd September 2022 after 10 years of being together, Ellie Fletcher (1997–2005) and Hector Lowe (1997–2004), married at Elmore Court in Gloucestershire. Many Housians attended, and the

happy couple arranged for a special “WHS Photo” with Ellie’s mother Debbie Francis who used to work at School.

Standing left to right: Edward Fletcher (2003), Marina Heumann (2005), Iona James (2008), Billy Grace (2004),

Hector Lowe (2004), Ellie Lowe née Fletcher (2005), Debbie Francis (Ellie’s mum), Gabriel Lowe (Hec’s brother), Emilia Lowe (Hec’s sister), Charlie Drinkwater (2005) and William Berrill (2004). Seated left to right: Rupert Sakalli (2004), Harry Burch (2004).



ALUMNI NEWS

If you have any alumni news you would like to share that could be featured on our LinkedIn page, Instagram account, in HOUSE magazine or on the School website, please email Emma McGowan, Alumni & Development Manager at emma.mcgowan@winchester-house.org.

OUR SOCIALS

We’re delighted to share that we’ve relaunched our LinkedIn page. The new page will carry news and updates on our Alumni programme. Please do connect at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/winchester-house-school>. We are also very active on our Instagram account at ‘winchesterhouseschool’.

LinkedIn



Instagram

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WE TEACH THE FUTURE

To book a private tour, please email
admissions@winchester-house.org

We teach the future, nurture ambition, grow potential,
and change the world, one pupil at a time.

We are Winchester House

WINCHESTER
HOUSE



Independent Day & Boarding School
for 3-13 year olds in Brackley, Northants