

M. Boudon



David Boudon began teaching in the French Department this year. He previously taught at a school in Surrey.

Where were you born and brought up?

I was born in the south of France in a very small village called Marvejols. I stayed there until I was around eighteen, and then I went to university in the middle of France, l'Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont Ferrand where I studied English and American literature and history.

Why did you decide to live in England (and teach)?

My first idea was to become an English teacher in France. I travelled to England for a year to practise my English, but I loved London so much that I decided to stay.

If you could take three things on a desert island, what would they be?

The first thing I would take would be an egg, a Polaroid camera, and some sun cream.

How have you found your time at Eltham so far?

I have found it absolutely brilliant. It takes a bit of time to get used to new people and surroundings, but I can't believe that it has already been a year since I first arrived here.

If you could change one thing about the school, what would it be?

It would be to have a vegetable patch in front of the school. I am from the countryside and I think it is really important to know where our food comes from; much more than going to Tesco and buying organic food which is in the end no better. The main thing that shocked me when I first moved to England was the really poor quality of food and products available. There is a massive improvement to be done. And who said "you are what you eat"?

What were your first thoughts about Eltham College?

I came for the job interview in March 2007, and when I first arrived here I thought the school looked absolutely stunning. When I saw all the sports pitches and areas around the school I thought it was brilliant.

If you were a fruit or vegetable, what would it be?

I would be a lychee (tiny red fruit that are sharp and prickly on the outside, but they are really sweet and juicy). Also you can keep them for a very long time and after a few months their flesh turns into liquor...

What is your favourite film?

My favourite film is *The Goonies* (about a group of friends who find a map in the attic of a very old house which leads them to treasure). I always dreamt something like this would happen to me and my friends when I was younger... It never did though.

What is the difference between the French and English sense of humour?

There is probably as much difference as there is between a carrot and an apple (they are totally different, but you can't explain why).

How would you sum up your teaching style?

I would say that I hope I am quite funny and my lessons are enjoyable, but I know that I am really stubborn, and I hope I'm not too harsh sometimes.

Tell us a strange/random fact about yourself.

The thing I hate the most in life is going to the supermarket because I always end up with a trolley where at least one of the wheels never turns.

What are the main differences between French and English schools?

The most obvious difference is the uniform, because these are not worn in France. Also, in France you cannot really find this spirit of community as a school and the children do not really make friends among pupils from other year groups. You are not as close to your teachers as you are in England I think it is why I like teaching here. But most importantly school days in France are much longer (8am to 6pm) and the timetables are much heavier probably because of the Baccalauréat which is like the A level but for twelve or more subjects which means much more work... The thing that I miss the most is the study of philosophy in the Upper Sixth in France as I can remember that it was everybody's favourite subject as it opens your eyes to the world and reminds you of your place in it.

What areas of extra curricular activities do you want to become involved in?

I know for a fact that it will never happen, but I would like to do some cookery lessons.

Why are the English so poor at Football?

Probably because they eat too much “fish and chips”, and drink too much beer, so they cannot run fast enough. No to be honest I do not think too much about the results but I think it is absolutely shocking to see how much the players are paid in this country. This is no longer a sport, it is an industry.

What is your favourite region of France and why?

My favourite region would be mine which is between Les Cévennes and Le Massif Central. It is a long-shaped region: at the south of it is the sea, in the middle there is a beautiful canyon that runs across France, and in the north there are mountains where you can snowboard and ski. I think it is absolutely lovely and I would advise everybody to go down there for a holiday as this is what I would call “real France”.

Which region of France do you find not so attractive, and why?

To be fair I would say Paris. It is really the most beautiful city in the world but it became far too big to be a healthy place to live in. It shows all the social problems you can find in France, poverty, violence, pollution, stress... I am afraid to say that the romantic Paris we all seek has now disappeared.

Why does London have such a high population of French people?

Probably because of the liberal economy which is in place here. It is much easier to find a job here than anywhere else in the world if you have no qualification. And if you have some you can actually decide precisely what you want to do with your career. As a teacher for example you can choose where you want to work, what you want to teach and who you want to work with. I honestly think that it is easier to be happy in your work life in this country than in France and the recent “improvements” that our new president brought in just confirms me in this opinion. The situation in France is declining really quickly and I am really happy not to have to endure it.

Richard Prior (Yr 7)

Ms Brass



Elinor Brass joined the school as Head of Art earlier this year. She read History and History of Art at Birmingham University, went to Cambridge University to train to be a teacher and then studied for a Masters in Painting at Wimbledon School of Art.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Staffordshire...which is about half way between Birmingham and Liverpool. So I guess I should count myself lucky not to be inflicted with a really strong Midlands accent.

When you were younger what did you see yourself doing?

Actually in all honesty, Art has always been the most important thing to me but it was so badly taught at school that I was a bit confused about what to do. I decided to take what I considered at the time to be the more sensible option of History at University instead as I thought it would give me more options but it was a bit too dry for me.

I had the most inspiring History of Art Professor, who really confirmed to me that I should be learning about and making Art and not writing essays on Machiavelli.

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I love my subject and feel incredibly privileged to be able to talk about Art all day every day. I also get time to make my own work, which is really important to me. In fact, I think I am very lucky to be able to teach and make. They kind of feed each other.

Which year do you think are the best to teach? Why?

I can see that the right answer should be Lower 6th and I do really enjoy teaching the exam classes because I like being able to support the students to pursue their own interests. However, it is also brilliant teaching the younger years because they tend to be happy to experiment and take risks.

m. Coquelin



Sebastien Coquelin leaves the school after six years teaching in the French department, to take up a position at Sevenoaks School.

If you had to eat something for the rest of your life, what would you eat?

I eat a lot of fruit so I will go for that. Although I do love curry.

What is your favourite book? Film? Music artist?

My favourite book is the *Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel*, which has been the cause of lots of adventures. I think *Memento* is a brilliant film and I saw a Russian film called *The Return* a few years back, which I thought was pretty incredible. Have been listening to Feist a lot recently and Arcade Fire... but I still love the Stone Roses.

Who is your favourite artist? Why?

That is a really tough one. In fact I don't have just one. Having recently been to the Peter Doig exhibition and been blown away by it, I think he has crept into my top ten. I studied Rembrandt for my final paper at University and so he is incredibly important to me. Louise Bourgeois, Tapes, Cy Twombly, Vermeer, Fra Angelico, Mike Nelson, Egon Schiele, Richard Wentworth, Robert Rauschenberg, Anselm Kiefer, Morandi, Cornelia Parker and I absolutely love Eva Hesse's work.

If you had a week to live what would you do?

I would spend it with my family and friends.

What year was the best year of your life? Why?

I think my best year was my year in Cambridge actually. Made some fantastic friends, played lots of sport and made the most of all the social events.

What is the craziest thing you have done in your life?

When I was 18, I decided that instead of sensibly doing a foundation course in Art or going straight to University that I wanted to go abroad and have a complete break from studying to decide what I wanted to do. So applied to go and teach in Prague, because I decided that would be a fun place to live for a bit. It is a bit of a long story, but I ended up being placed in a slightly scary industrial city in south-west Poland teaching English in a girls' convent school..., which was not ideal, as I didn't speak Polish and no one spoke English. I got paid £10 a month and lived next door to the Priest.

Joe Crust and Georgie Wakeling L6

Why did you come to Eltham College?

I heard it was a very good school with a special community sense, so when an ad came up I just went for it, and I'm so glad I did! They have been the happiest years of my working life. Also, my wife's first kiss was with a guy from Eltham College, and as her taste is so good (she married me!) I trusted her and decided to come here.

Any special moments to tell us about?

Well... during my first French exchange to Tours I had to stay with some horrible French people, which has to be the worst experience of my life. Carey winning the house cup the year I took over was the best positive moment.

What was it like being in charge of Carey?

It was an amazing experience. There's no such thing as a house system in France, so I was doing things my own way - very competitively! I loved motivating and galvanising the troops, and it was nice seeing not so academic students getting to do something. Vive Carey!

Which are the nicest parts of France to visit and why?

Brittany, because it's so unspoiled, the south to get a nice tan and Paris because... because it's Paris!

What are the differences between teaching in England and France?

In France we have little pastoral care, no house system and only one major exam (the Baccalaureate). Also, teachers don't have to mark exercise books - heaven!

What are your favourite French films?

Ridicule is one, because I love costume dramas, and *Le Vieux Fusil* because it has my favourite actress, Romy Schneider, in it.

Like to put anything into Room 101?

Robert Mugabe, the IOC people who gave China the Olympics and Jamie Oliver for ruining school lunches. Oh, and Mr. Marlot for obvious reasons!

Describe yourself in 5 words.

Arrogant, approachable, witty, inspirational and sensitive.

What things would you take out of your burning house?

Oh... [thinks hard] I'm not materialistic, so let it burn! Let the whole house burn!

Which teachers will you miss?

I don't need to mention names, they know who they are!

What are your ambitions for life after Eltham?

To be Headmaster one day. I want to rise quickly in Sevenoaks (oh, and make more money!).

How has EC changed you?

I now know that not all wealthy people are stuck up. I discovered there are some very clever students out there. I learned what black holes are (the pinnacle of knowledge!)

Waitrose or Asda?

Waitrose, but I can't afford it so Asda.

France or England?

Oh, good question! France for food. England for opportunities.

You mean money?

[laughs] Yeah! Money!

Any last words?

"Luck, not fluke"

Matthew Costello (L6)

mrs Oldfield



Laura Oldfield read music at Pembroke College, Cambridge and joined the Music department in September.

This is your life...

My life has always been based around music. I have always loved to play the violin and did my diploma quite early, but I knew to progress further I would have to dedicate my life to playing and didn't feel able to make that commitment. Then at 16 I went on an Eton Choral course and that really determined my future. I knew from that experience that I wanted to be a choral scholar. I applied to Trinity College at Cambridge and got a 3A offer but when results day came I was 5 marks off an A in one subject. Luckily I got into Pembroke College anyway, and still sang at Trinity! Whilst there I was spotted by Tenebrae, a top professional choir, and joined them. I did more and more professional singing but slowly got drawn towards teaching. I did my PGCE at the Institute of Education and joined Eltham College as my first teaching post.

What are your musical aspirations, both personally and for the school?

Well for the school it's difficult because Mr Johnson and Mr Levy have already achieved so much to make the music school as thriving as it is. Vocally, I am keen to improve general sight reading and to move through repertoire more quickly. I'd love to have more regular singing in all Year 7-9 music lessons. In terms of instrumental music at the school, I am really excited about the upcoming Cadogan Hall concert, where the orchestra are performing "meatier" works. Jazz is already great and our VMTs (visiting music teachers) are so good. It would be great to introduce a wider range of music that challenges the notation base pupils here are common with. For example African drumming, steel pans and gospel choirs (we miss Jude, our gap year student!) would be fantastic. Lastly, I think the Rock Studio is going to be a significant asset if we ever investigate more into Music Technology. Personally, I would love to play the violin more often - I've gone from playing

three hours a day minimum to much less. The school is supportive of my professional singing although I always want to do more, particularly as I feel it complements teaching.

This term you have done some fantastic work with consort, with a more contemporary style, yet you have a career in classical singing. Where do your musical loyalties lie?

When performing music, I don't have particular genres that I love: I think your loyalties are established with particular groups of musicians, all of whom give an equal amount of commitment to the performance. This is particularly important with small choral groups. I also love consort because the smaller group knows each other well and is clearly having a great time, whilst giving the audience a fantastic performance. I love singing anything from Billie Jean to scat to Macmillan to Bach!

Your life is going to be made into a movie, but who will play the starring role?

What a horrible question, I'm either going to sound stupid or vain. I suppose my friend Amy Carson, from the Kenneth Branagh film *Magic Flute*, who is an up and coming star. If it's going to be a big movie it would be great to give her the work!

How does it feel to be possibly the first female ever in the music department and have you made any changes?

It feels fabulous although I do have the music secretary Ms Jerome so I'm not totally alone. Changes? Well we've bought an enormous ladder so I can reach the top shelves and there is more moisturiser around. The department is slightly chattier I suppose. Anything serious? I hope it is nice for the girls to have a female teacher in music, but you would have to ask them. Also, I have tried to bring some new, innovative ideas fresh from my PGCE into lessons, and we use the interactive whiteboards far more. Oh, I've also brought high heels, but they may have been here already...why is Mr Johnson so tall?

As a first time teacher, who do you like to teach the most?

Well as a new teacher I don't think I've really decided yet. All of my classes can be fantastic and, like me, irritating. I don't have a favourite right now and it largely depends on the time of day. A class is always better Monday 3 and 4 compared to Friday afternoon when everybody is tired.

Do you think the current A level music syllabus covers enough of the important areas of being "musical" and would you make any changes to it?

Currently it doesn't, but we are changing syllabuses and I believe the new one will. During my education, I enjoyed writing discursive essays and having debates about music, which the new syllabus offers. The current course is strong in certain areas but the new course will offer a breadth of musical experiences that will be invaluable for the students.

If you were a fruit or vegetable, what would you be and why?

To be honest, although I eat fruit every day I don't like it that much. It would have to be a soft fruit because with things like apple you always get a tough bit that hurts your gums.

You could be a vegetable...

Yes I could be a vegetable that I like. It would probably have to be spinach because you can do a lot with it. It can go into a salad, be steamed or even just be put into a hot pan and fried. It's flexible. You can have baby leaf or mature. And I'm growing some! I don't really have a good analogy about it but just have a good feeling about spinach. It has got lots of iron.

Describe yourself using only your initials.

Um....Loyal Energetic Odd

In today's music culture amongst children, classical music is not hugely represented. What do you think should/could be done to rectify this?

This is something that I have thought about a lot and discussed during my PGCE, but I still don't know the answer. I do not think we should hold up classical music as the only genre or the best thing. However, we also should not let notation die out as it has been suggested. I don't know what the solution is.

If somebody removed the restraints of money, work and stress, where would you be right now?

Right now, it's nice weather so probably outside with food, wine, music, dance and fabulous company.

What is the answer to most of your problems/biggest de-stressor?

Singing, cooking, wine, girly gossip, reading and chatting to my husband.

Who would you most like to be stuck in an elevator with?

The most: My husband. It would be nice to spend some time together; we don't see each other very often.

Hamish Greer (Yr 11)

Mr Pollard



Matthew Pollard joined the school as Head of English in September. He previously taught at Latymer Upper School in West London.

Tell us a bit about yourself

I was born and went to school in South Manchester and studied at Newcastle University. I then took a PGCE course at Cambridge and started teaching in a comprehensive in Manchester. I moved on to a couple of Surrey boarding schools before teaching at Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith. Whilst at Latymer I completed an MA in English at King's College, London. I wanted to move on and run an English department; the chance to become Head of English at Eltham was just too good an opportunity to turn down.

What do you think you bring to Eltham that no one else does?

I'm far too humble to answer such a question!

Any special Eltham moments so far to tell us about?

My first impressions of the school are that the students and staff are so friendly and polite, such a contrast from my first school! Eltham is a very calm, yet purposeful school; the surroundings are tremendous. Room One is a microcosm for the school as a whole: there is the central chandelier that symbolises tradition and there is an Interactive Whiteboard that demonstrates the school's commitment to move with the times. The Lecture Competition also impressed me - Year Seven students being able to deliver erudite talks to a room of their peers was striking. On reflection it is the students here who make this such a special school; to teach bright, polite and enthusiastic students in such a relaxed environment is pretty much teacher heaven!

If you could force every pupil to read one book over the summer, what would it be and why?

The *Magus*, by John Fowles. It's about a young man who leaves Oxford with no idea what to do with himself and ends up applying to teach at a boarding school on a Greek island. A psychological thriller, eminently suitable for a warm beach!

Who is your favourite character in Shakespeare and why?

Iago in *Othello*. I love his malevolent, scheming nature, and the fact he has absolute self-knowledge throughout. Shakespeare's exploration of true evil in the play is fascinating; Samuel Taylor Coleridge believes the character of Iago reveals "the motive hunting of motiveless malignancy" and I agree!

Who, in your opinion, is the best living writer currently writing in English?

Cormac McCarthy, but equally J.G. Ballard, Martin Amis and Philip Roth are our most important novelists. I must add that Harold Pinter is our greatest living playwright and that Seamus Heaney is our best poet by a country mile. In the field of language/ linguistics, David Crystal and Noam Chomsky are geni!

Which era or area of English Literature do you prefer? Why?

I enjoy reading nineteenth century novels and writers but I'm really a modern (twentieth century onwards) novel reader, mainly because I read so many of the books recommended by my friends (a culture I'd like to see develop at Eltham). I'm also a big fan of European and African literature.

Previous heads of English have become involved with drama in the school. Do you have any plans?

Yes! Leave it to the experts (unless they're desperate)!

Do you think teaching today is too focused on exam preparation? Or is there still time to look around the subject in a 'wider' way?

No. We should be encouraging students to read widely throughout GCSE and A Level courses. Hopefully they will be enthused by the range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer. I'm hoping the nature of the new A-level course, which puts emphasis on reading widely, will encourage students to read far beyond the syllabus. There are up to date booklists that I've placed on the English Department website: get reading! It is the key to success in English. If you enjoy reading for its own sake, then English is the subject for you.

Who, or what, would go into Room 101?

Well, I'm a miserable person so I mustn't get carried away with the list! Reality TV shows, for a start. Do we need them? Do they enrich our lives? I have no time for impolite, arrogant and self - important people. Robert Mugabe has to go in there for what he has done to his own people and his country. Ditto George Bush and Tony Blair for taking their respective countries into an illegal war under the guise of a war on terrorism; who are they kidding? It's a resource war for oil!

Aside from marking A-Level essays, what do you do in your free time?

Renovating the house, mainly. Reading (of course) and listening to music also occupy a lot of my time. Following the fortunes of Manchester United and ribbing Chelsea/ Arsenal fans! I also enjoy any kind of fishing, walking and running (slowly!)

Any particular genre of music?

I could go on all day... mainly rock, both modern and classic (Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Neil Young etc). I also like aggressive rock, bands like Tool, Killing Joke and experimental groups (Stereolab, Squarepusher). To relax I listen to bands such as The Chameleons and jazz/ funk (Grant Green, The Meters, Tower of Power and of course, The Boss, James Brown).

What was your least favourite subject at school and Why?

Physics – we had to do all three sciences at school – talk about square pegs and round holes! I passed though!

Three things to take on a desert island?

My girlfriend, a springer spaniel and a never-ending case of Châteauneuf du Pape.

Describe yourself in 5 words

Diligent, optimistic (I try to be!), passionate, misanthropic and generous.

Any burning ambitions for the future?

To make the English Department at Eltham the best in any school in London. Afterwards? I may move on to deputy head somewhere, but only time will tell. Eltham College is such a lovely school, it will always be a difficult place to leave.

If you were a fruit, which one would it be and why?

A grapefruit. Bitter on the palette at first but this is offset by the knowledge that it is good for you.

Matthew Costello (L6)

MR ROSS

Andrew Ross joined the Biology Department in September. He was educated at Wellington College in Berkshire and at Cardiff University.

Where did you grow up?

I did most of my growing up at boarding School. I boarded for my last three years at prep school and then for the whole of my time at Wellington College. I had a great time, had the opportunity to play loads of sport, made life long friends and generally thoroughly enjoyed myself.

Is Wellington College a very different school to here?

There are in fact many similarities, with both schools offering a broad spectrum of opportunities. At Wellington I took full advantage of all the sports on offer but the arts were well represented with regular drama productions (I only reached the glittering heights of boy three sadly) concerts and exhibitions. Wellington and Eltham both also promote a range of trips, while at School I was lucky enough to spend a month in Thailand and now at Eltham I am looking forward to taking a trip to Honduras. The house system although equally competitive was a little different at Wellington with fourteen houses of about fifty boys (and one girls house) vying for top honours. I suppose the most noticeable difference was the school day although we started at a similar time the day didn't officially finish till 9 o'clock, which gave more time to complete everything.

Tell us more about this extraordinary biology trip you're organizing to Central America?

The trip will last two weeks. The first will be spent working alongside research biologists, as well as PhD and undergraduate students, in the cloud forests of Honduras. Here we will be collecting samples, sleeping in hammocks and for those more happy with heights climbing, on ropes I hasten to add, we will go up to the canopy to watch the sun rise. The

second week will be spent diving from one of the small Honduran islands in the Caribbean where we will get the opportunity to complete a reef ecology course and enjoy some amazing diving.

Where's the best place to dive in the world and why?

I have been lucky enough to work in Central America as a Divemaster where I got the opportunity to dive the blue hole regularly, which often appears in top ten dive site lists; however the best time I have had is in the Perhentian Islands in Malaysia. They are really undeveloped and staying in a hut on the beach and then taking a five minute longboat ride to one of the many dive sites, which have the most vibrant colours and incredible diversity of species, was just awesome.

What degree did you study at University?

I studied Zoology at Cardiff University where I focussed on evolution, specifically human evolution and speciation.

What three things would you take on a desert island?

Uuum.... (Long pause) Compressor, Scuba Diving equipment, Complete works of Alexandre Dumas. Sadly you can't dive all the time and Dumas' books are generally pretty long, also I'd want my eventual rescuers to think I was I was suitably well read.

Embarrassing moment at Eltham College?

As I lay gasping for air one Thursday afternoon after a certain unnamed year nine sportsmen smacked a softball into me.

What do you have on your iPod?

Hair Metal by Guns and Roses, the greatest rock band in the world ever!

If you won a million pounds what would you do with it?

I would finance my world travel plans... the route is drawn up, I intend to travel around the world in 800 days (not 80) and visit every country in the world.

What would your super power be if you had one?

(Another long pause) As a bit of a comic book geek I'm spoilt for choice, but I think I would to combine flying and breathing underwater (due to increasing prices of scuba equipment)

If you could invite four people living or dead to a dinner party who would they be and why?

Ummm.. Jacques-Yves Cousteau because not only did he invented the scuba diving equipment that most people now use, but also sailed around on his boat diving in some of the most amazing locations on earth. Omid Djalili for a bit of humour at the dining table, I am reliably informed by the only Iranian I teach that he is in fact Iran's funniest comic so that's got to say something. Frank Sinatra because he effortlessly cool and would also provide a little after dinner entertainment, and finally Mohammad Ali because he is inspirational and simply AWESOME.

What one thing that has happened in your life has made the biggest impact on who you are today?

I became a teacher because I was inspired by my Biology teacher at Wellington. I had him for four out of my five years at the school and he had an incredible enthusiasm for the subject, which he instilled in his class, and a passion for teaching. He is one the main reasons that I studied biology at university, and became a teacher in the end.

If you could speak to one type of animal, what would it be why?

I would talk to a bird that soars above everyone else. It would bring a different perspective to things.

What rumours have you heard of yourself this year?

(Chuckles quietly) When I first arrived I was asked by some pupils whether I had played rugby for the New South Wales Waratahs and even if I had been capped for Australia, which I must concede I made little effort to dispel. I've also have been told I have a resemblance to the character Tintin and that my hair looks the guy in *A Flock of Seagulls*.

And finally what fruit would you be and why?

I would be a Lam Yai (dragon's eyes fruit) because they are exotic, different and make me sound well travelled.

Aamar Goolamabbas and Ankit Patel (L6)

Mr O'Shaughnessy



Michael O'Shaughnessy left the school in December to take up a post in Ireland, after six years as Head of Modern Languages.

Mrs Smith



Mrs Smith joined the school in September, teaching IT and computing.

Which part of the UK are you from? I notice your accent is not from around here...

I come from Fife on the east coast of Scotland...from a small village called Kincardine, to be precise, although I have now lived in England as long as I had lived in Scotland. I don't think I have an accent until I hear myself speak, which I hate, and realise I sound very Scottish.

What was your previous occupation before coming to Eltham College?

I was a teacher, but before that I was a computer programmer. I have worked in accounts and also run the quality control for roof tiles, and have been a nanny.

What sort of programmes were you involved with when you worked as a programmer?

Most things were pretty dull work orientated things, like giving people birthday miles when it was their birthday, automated telephone systems etc but the most fun thing was creating a *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* game for an away day.

What drew you to teaching at Eltham?

The friendly staff in the staff room, the lovely grounds, and of course the very pleasant pupils I came across in the trial lesson that I had to do.

How did you become involved in computers?

Basically my mum thought I would be good at it because she was involved in computers. I went to Greenwich University and did a course in Computer Studies and acquired a job from there, starting as an AS400 operator.

If you had a million pounds, what would you do with it?

Pay off my mortgage, all my debts, and then fix up my house and save anything that's left.

What do you think of the ICT facilities here?

They are very good, with lots of computer rooms!

Traditionally interviewed teachers are asked this question: if you were a fruit or vegetable, what would you be?

I would be a ripe soft peach.

How did you decide to become a teacher?

It is just something I wanted to be. At the time I liked children, but I think I have changed my mind since (only kidding!)

If you were not, what would like to be and why?

I would like to be a star in musical films.

Which Microsoft program do you most enjoy teaching?

Microsoft Access, with the year Tens.

What is your favourite book?

I have just read *Lakes in the Clouds* by Sara Donati which was very good. It was about a variety of different people in America, during a time when slaves were just beginning to buy their freedom, and when Indians were still looked upon as having a lower status than white people. The story made you thankful that times have changed and that most people are not so narrow-minded now; also it makes you thankful that you have never had to deal with the hardships that these people faced with great dignity.

And music?

Everything...but I prefer "dancey" things. I like everything from 70's disco, 80's cheese, old school classics from the 90's, commercial dance such as Darude, Scooter, and as a lot of the boys know I am not adverse to a little Pendulum.

Do you have any deep secrets that you want to share with me (and the several hundred other pupils that will be reading this article in a couple of months)?

I have a motorbike licence, and I used to be a D.J every Friday and Saturday night.

What do you think will be the next "big thing" in technology?

I think people will be able to control the items in their houses (so they could say "turn on the heating" into a phone and the heating would come on, or "turn on the lights" and the lights would turn on).

What is the most revolutionary invention: printing or the internet?

I guess it's probably the internet, because it has so much information at close hand.

Should Scotland become independent from the rest of the UK?

No, I think we should all remain united as one country, but as I live in England and will be unlikely to ever live in Scotland again I have not got a very strong opinion on the matter.

Richard Prior (Yr 7)

Dr Bowles



Dr Helen Bowles joined the Science department in September, teaching Chemistry and Biology.

First some background information, where did you grow up and study?

Well, I grew up in Hertfordshire. I did a degree in Bath and then moved to Germany and got a Masters from the Max Planck Society. I then carried on studying as I enjoy research and did a PhD at Bristol, then a PGCE at Oxford.

What made you want to teach chemistry and biology?

I suppose I have always enjoyed it, and I like that things interlink and make sense. There is always a right or wrong answer in science, and I like that.

Did you have any other aspirations in the past?

When I was studying I wanted to continue research and carry that on as a career, as opposed to becoming a teacher; but then when I did research for my degrees I realised that it wasn't as exciting as I'd hoped. I would have liked to have been a chemist too, but I have never really had any other aspirations.

If you were a superheroine with three superpowers, what would they be and why?

First I'd like to be able to time travel – because who wouldn't? – and secondly invisibility, which would be quite cool. Seeing as I'm a scientist I should probably add something vaguely

related to that... maybe an ability to solve all chemical equations. Oh, and also the ability to make money. As for a name, probably something really catchy like "the time travelling invisible equation solving money making woman".

Right... what year group do you enjoy teaching the most and why?

I like teaching all of them. They all have different merits and they're all fun to teach.

Do you prefer chemistry or biology?

Well I have studied chemistry more, with my degrees being in that subject, and it is more abstract – you can't always see why something happens, or even see it happening, but it works out. Biology you can see, but I think overall I'd have to pick chemistry.

If you were stranded on a desert island, what three things would you take with you and why?

Would it be cheating to say a boat to get back to the mainland?

Yes, if it weren't cheating nobody would ask that question any more...

Fine, well a mobile to call people. Then unlimited food, because I wouldn't really enjoy hunting and gathering. Thirdly, all my friends... although that makes the mobile phone slightly redundant.

I can see you thought hard about that one. What attracted you to Eltham College?

To be honest I just saw a job advert! It's my first job and when I came everyone was very friendly, and it's fairly small and has a nice atmosphere to be in.

What three things would you put in room 101?

I can't answer that! I don't know, there's not really much I hate.

No other teachers? Or pupils? Or insoluble chemical equations?

I've got on with all the staff here, so no... and the pupils are all friendly and nice, so again no. And to put a chemical equation in would be like blasphemy!

Finally, if you were a fruit what would you be and why?

I think I'd be a strawberry. It reminds me of lazy summers, and I like summer...

Matthew Stokes (Yr 11)