

Cotswold Preview

September 2011

Can you tell us a little about your background and why you have chosen to join The Cheltenham Ladies' College as its new Principal?

I was born in Malawi, Central Africa, and educated there until the age of 16 when I accepted a scholarship to The Cheltenham Ladies' College for my Sixth Form years. The significant educational breadth, personal confidence and encouragement I benefited from whilst studying there has had a profound effect on the rest of my life, and I will always be indebted to the school for this. I then went to Cambridge to read Engineering Science following a gap year working for the Structural Engineering division of Ove Arup & Partners. Having worked in industry for a little while, I then followed my heart into the teaching profession, beginning at Radley College and later moving to Epsom College in Surrey and most recently Blundell's School in Devon, where I was Director of Studies for six years.



Throughout my career, I have greatly enjoyed the pastoral as well as the academic aspects, and have drawn great inspiration from generations of pupils over the years as well as some truly dedicated colleagues. To have now been invited to lead the College is an honour that I deeply cherish. Knowing first-hand how fundamentally a pupil's values, outlook and aspirations can be nurtured and developed by a first class school, it is an exciting prospect.

What is the ethos of the school?

Over one hundred and fifty years have passed since the College was originally founded, and the second Principal was a visionary young woman called Dorothea Beale who was appointed at the age of 27 and led the school for 48 years. Her legacy of courage, independence, equality, purpose, care, tolerance and compassion is still strongly championed today. She believed that the chief role of an educator was to "help others find out for themselves, with all the lasting joy that accompanies the effort". This approach is something we are committed to as a teaching staff, aspiring to true academic excellence but from a foundation of confident and secure independent thought. These are skills which will serve the girls well as they move into the next stages of their education and working lives.

What is your personal philosophy of education?

In short, we never stop learning. The past two decades have deepened my appreciation of how important it is for us as adults to be open-minded and receptive to change, and to the opportunities it can bring if embraced positively and with discrimination. When children are young and 'finding their feet' intellectually, socially and physically, it is often a natural reflex to want to protect them from shocks, and to 'risk manage' their lives as much as possible because we care about their well-being. In a well-run school, risk will certainly be managed! However, I also believe that our times of



mental and emotional difficulty can help shape us and strengthen our resilience; helping young people to become self-determining and possessed of true self-knowledge is just as important a goal as acquiring good qualifications.

What would you say are the main benefits of attending a single-sex school?

This was put rather simply by a pupil – that in a first-class girls' school like CLC where so much is possible and so many academic and extra-curricular options exist, there is absolutely nothing that girls cannot do, and that girls do not lead. This becomes so natural a context that the focus becomes immediately “what” and “how” and “how well” rather than “if” – with some remarkable outcomes at times.

Living in this sort of environment on a daily basis, over time becoming leaders of different aspects of school life, and being supported by a community of staff who have their full focus on the personal and academic

development of girls, presents a powerful combination of influences that can ignite the sparks of the pupils' highest potential.

Does The Cheltenham Ladies' College suit a particular type of character? Are there specific disciplines in which it excels?

The College welcomes girls of all types with many different interests. We care for the largest community of boarding girls in the country, as well as in the region of almost 200 day girls (the boarding to day ratio is around 3:1). We work extremely hard to balance the considerable advantages of our scale (facilities, variety, curriculum flexibility, enrichment programmes) with the importance of not ‘getting lost’ in a large year group. We have 14 houses each with their own pastoral team and catering staff to help provide this personal care and sense of ‘home’ within their busy lives. The girls have spoken warmly of the range and richness of their friendship groups and the strong support systems that exist at many levels within the school community.

The College has recently broadened its Sixth Form curriculum to offer the International Baccalaureate as an alternative programme alongside A levels, and this has been a wonderful development for us as a world class boarding school. We have a long-established reputation for Science and Maths, but with a strong commitment to Languages (including Mandarin *ab initio* in Year 9), Humanities and the Creative



Arts, the pupils benefit from a dynamic and thriving intellectual balance of the academic disciplines, with many different combinations of options available at both GCSE and in the Sixth Form. Classroom teaching is supplemented by our 'Opening Minds' programme on Saturdays and a large number of visits, trips, lectures and workshops.

What are your plans for the future direction of the school?

As the global economy has been ravaged by financial shocks and naturally occurring calamities, it has never been more important to have a deep and guiding sense of the interdependence of our lives – both with other human beings and with the natural world. For many years I have been interested in the principles that underpin sustainability in its truest sense, complex as they are, and am delighted that the work of the Environment Group (on which staff and pupils sit together) has helped to secure our status as an Eco-School. Our new performing arts



centre, whose graceful architecture has been recognised by a recent award, has set an outstanding standard for us to match as regards new and upgraded facilities, and we have new Sports facilities and boarding accommodation in the planning stages.

Academically, it is crucial for me that all pupils are equipped with rational, rigorous powers of analysis and scientific methodology to navigate the different arguments that will face them as they live their lives and care for their families. These will relate to food and energy sourcing and security, health, nutrition, social and ethical consumerism, and the use of technology amongst many other complex and emerging issues, not least their pensions and their life expectancies! Within the working lifetimes of the current pupils, it is more likely than not that we will make medical and cosmological breakthroughs that unlock the deeper secrets of life and of the universe. In this potential future territory, and armed with this knowledge, we must give serious thought to the source of our spiritual nourishment and our ethics, so my passionate commitment is to leading a school which supports individual journeys of personal faith, inspires the exploration of philosophy, and encourages the development of the imagination.

Cotswold Life

September 2011

Name of school: The Cheltenham Ladies' College

Name of Head: Eve Jardine-Young

How long have you been at The Cheltenham Ladies' College? Since September 2011

What attracted you to it? Over twenty years ago, I accepted a scholarship to the College for my Sixth Form studies. This period had a profound influence on the years which followed, and I believe it to be one of the world's finest schools.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be? With excellent facilities and such a strong tradition in the education of girls, the sheer scale and scope of subject choices, activities and enrichment available at College is difficult to match. We now offer the International

Baccalaureate alongside A levels in the Sixth form and this has added an extra dimension which has resonance for all ages. We are committed to an ethos of on-going self-critical review, which means arrangements are regularly refreshed and re-examined in pursuit of excellence and the optimal provision of different teaching and learning opportunities.

Tell me something about your pupils... We have the largest community of boarding girls in the country, as well as in the region of two hundred day girls (around 880 pupils in all, aged 11-18). The changes in the girls as they become young women reflect the universal story of transformation and personal development, so sweeping generalisations are unwise. However I have found them to be collectively grounded, purposeful, tolerant, ambitious, discerning, enterprising and excellent company. I would add that these are qualities which apply to the staff too.

What are the fees? Day fees are £6,455 per term (£7,340 per term for Sixth Form Entrants) and £9,615 per term for Boarders (£10,831 per term for Sixth Form Entrants).

Do you have any Famous alumni? Cheryl Gillan, MP, Katherine Hamnett, fashion designer, Nicola Horlick, business woman, Lisa Jardine, historian, Fiona MacTaggart, MP, Bridget Riley, artist, Kristin Scott Thomas, actress, Amanda Wakeley, fashion designer

What does the future hold? The school recently opened an award-winning theatre (the Parabola Arts Centre) which has revitalised all aspects of the performing arts and provided a wonderful venue for visiting productions. Having set ourselves this standard, we intend to build a state of the art Sports facility and new boarding accommodation in the immediate future. Our Environmental Committee (pupils and staff) is particularly active and we are delighted to have just been awarded recognition as an Eco-School. The principles of sustainability are fundamental to our future planning in the fullest sense, and we have a number of different initiatives under development for the medium and long term.



Hereford and Worcester Life

September 2011

Name of Headteacher: Eve Jardine-Young

School: The Cheltenham Ladies' College

Which schools and higher education establishments did you attend? St Andrew's, Malawi; The Cheltenham Ladies' College; Cambridge University

What was your favourite subject at school and why? Physics and English Literature – the former because it enables the understanding of so many natural phenomena, and the latter for the richness of language which allows shared communication, insight and feeling between human beings.

What subject did you study at university and why? Engineering Science – a multi-disciplinary course which taught me how to solve problems from first principles, and allowed scope to study aspects of economics and architecture. I was very preoccupied with the field of renewable energy, and the importance of appropriate and innovative technology in global economic development.

Which of your own teachers/lecturers influenced most and why? I was taught by a number of dedicated, passionate and rigorous teachers. The best of them believed we could do more than we thought we could, and they were generally right. I learned different but equally valuable things about life and self-sufficiency from those who were less inspiring. My most influential teacher was in fact my mother, whose unwillingness to accept limitations of aspiration, imagination or the setbacks caused by the failings of others remains the most powerful legacy in my life.

Which aspect of education in 2011 would you most like to change? I would love our focus to become more stable and secure on the things that unite us in our endeavours and our responsibilities than on what separates and divides us. I am excited by emerging developments in collaborative learning, and in partnerships between schools and different community groups (including other schools both locally and globally, as well as business, the professions and the NGO sector). Schools should not become 'bubbles'.

Which one thing do you hope pupils will learn for their time at your school? A lifelong love of learning in its widest possible sense. From this, so much else will follow.

