



## TRURO SCHOOL FOUNDATION

***Rachel Vaughan is an Old Truronian CO98 and a teacher at Truro School. She has been Chair of the Truro School Association for several years and in January 2020 was appointed a Trustee of the Foundation. Here she shares the reason behind her passion for the Foundation and its aims.***

In January 1991, at the age of eleven, I first set foot onto the Truro School campus, full of hopes and nerves, but little suspecting how much this morning would change the entire course of my future life. My mother and I were here to meet with then Director of Music, Derek Spedding, for my music scholarship audition. We were both a little bowled over by Derek, as he led us through a rabbit warren of corridors to the music practice rooms near the dining hall, talking at a hundred miles per hour about the audition process and the expectations placed on music scholars, but his warmth and John Cleese-like eccentricity soon put me at ease once the tests began. I was lucky enough to be born into a very musical family and had started my own musical education early with years of piano, oboe, theory and singing lessons already under my belt. Derek seemed impressed and assured my mum that he would do what he could to secure me a place – we remained dubious, however, knowing that there were other hurdles still to overcome and that even a generous bursary might not be enough.

By this stage of my life, my father, a farmer, was so ill following a series of strokes combined with his severe epilepsy that he needed round the clock nursing support and was in residential care in Hayle. The farm was let to a cousin and Mum supported us through her job as a library assistant. Despite the shadow of Dad's illness, my life was happy and comfortable in the midst of a wonderful community of friends and family in Troon, near Camborne, but Truro School fees, even heavily reduced ones, were out of the question.

Sometime later, with paperwork submitted, entrance exams sat and interviews completed, we received a letter stating that, thanks to a music scholarship, academic scholarship and government assisted place (sadly no longer in existence), I was to be awarded an entirely free place at Truro School, including subsidised travel and uniform.

I was in.

Arriving at school that September in my drastically oversized, bought-to-last blazer, I made friends quickly and soon felt at home. My unvoiced fears that I wouldn't fit in soon dissipated and I threw myself into school life whole-heartedly, determined to make the most of every

opportunity that came my way. Days were packed full as the music department kept me busy with multiple rehearsals most days on top of school work and an hour-long commute home by bus which seemed to take in every village between Truro and Camborne. Despite this, I filled my days with even more activities, including swimming, creative writing and many days spent hiking, camping and canoeing at Minions camps on Bodmin Moor, through which I proudly became the first girl to attain Adventure Training Colours.

Within the music department I was given opportunities to perform the kind of repertoire rarely encountered by schoolchildren alongside talented peers which laid the foundations for my later university study of music and professional performance. Little did I know during those early orchestra rehearsals that sitting behind me, playing the French horn (at least until rugby got the better of him) was my future husband, Guy, also a bursary recipient.

This 'Moment-Seizing' mentality was certainly greatly encouraged by our inspirational Headmaster, Guy Dodd, who later established the Truro School Foundation, and has stayed with me for life. On leaving school, I couldn't choose between Music and English Literature when applying for university, so studied both. Now, twenty years on and after a varied teaching career including time as a housemistress and five years as a CCF officer, I happily juggle my professional life as an English teacher and Head of Choristers back at Truro School, chairing the Truro School Association and serving as a Foundation Trustee with family life and my own varied musical commitments. I am never happier than when busy and have no doubt that Truro School set me up for a fulfilling life in which I've never shied away from a challenge, whether that's running a marathon or completing my Master's degree whilst working and parenting two under-fives. I know that I am by no means unique in this when I think of my multi-talented schoolfriends and their equally busy, fulfilling lives.

Guy and I feel very proud to be able to provide our own two children with a Truro School education and enjoy watching them throwing themselves into such an enormous range of interests at Truro School Prep: our son is a cross-country running, drama-loving chorister and our daughter is a ballet-dancing, judo-throwing trombonist.

It is a great privilege to see my life turn full circle and, through my work with the Chorister programme, which awards places to talented singers on a needs-blind basis, and as a Trustee of the Foundation, be able to start other young people on the life-changing journey which I was so lucky to begin almost thirty years ago.

If, like me, you are an Old Truronian who feels grateful for the many opportunities a Truro School education gave you, perhaps you might consider making a donation to the Guy Dodd Bursary Award Appeal.