

## A Bit About Me

Where do I begin? Being a teacher of History, I guess I ought to be chronological and start by saying that I am a Brummie, born and educated in Acocks Green at Holy Souls RC and then Archbishop Illsley RC. I enjoyed school and always knew that when some lessons or days were a bit boring, it was good for me and that if I kept working hard, good things would happen in my life.

School memories are often dominated by various teachers who opened my eyes, stretched my imagination, made me feel valued and basically helped build my self-esteem and self-belief. Sister Philomena and the legend that was, and is, Mr O'Connor - cowboys boots, long hair, Ford Capri, played guitar, owned a Betamax video player – you get the picture...

I was always aware of classmates who didn't work hard, didn't seem interested in getting a good job or didn't seem to care about how they made others feel. Luckily, I wasn't one of those students but always knew that if it wasn't for my supportive and loving parents, brother and sisters, maybe I would not be so advantaged in life.

I signed up to join the Royal Navy aged 15 or 16 but surprised myself with my GCSE results and instead stayed on at school to study A-levels in History, English Literature and Chemistry and an AS-level in Geography. My love of History emerged during those years but that love was largely the impact of two brilliant teachers, Miss Mann and Mr Alexander, who made it all seem so fascinating and, again, built my self-confidence to do well in the final exams.

Ignoring suggestions of a gap year, I went straight to The University of Liverpool for three years and gained a History Degree and always knew I wanted to become a teacher. After some fairly tough regular teaching in Toxteth, Liverpool, I made my mind up and was able to get on a PGCE History course at the University of Bristol. Our tutor was the incredible Mr Peter John who was another in a long line of inspirational and confidence building mentors or teachers who made each one of us deeply passionate about our subject and our new profession.

Since graduating as a teacher I have worked in four very different schools in Solihull, Coventry and Banbury, before joining Colmers in April 2011. I had been teaching for almost ten years before our first child. We now we have three of them at school and it has added another major understanding of how and why children learn and why they struggle at times. Again, I am reminded of the advantage children have when parents and carers take an interest, read with their children, help them with their homework, build their self-esteem, help them overcome doubts and help them deal with their fears. But also driving them here, there and everywhere for clubs, matches, practices and all the other things that fulfil their lives.

Watching any son, daughter, niece, nephew, or any child develop language, reading skills, write their first name or come up with their first original idea, joke or impersonation is an incredible experience and one that teachers, family members, parents and carers can all share in the pride and the responsibility. It's only in the past 13 or 14 years that I've truly understood that idea that it takes a community to educate child.

Whilst now middle aged and certain that I shall never play for Aston Villa, I remain ambitious and expect to become the first headteacher in space. Why not? Dreaming and ambition is not something we ought to give up when we become surrounded by cynicism and doubts. I am an optimist and a believer – those qualities sound perfect but being a teacher or a headteacher can sometimes make those ideals difficult to hang on to unless every child and colleague feel exactly the same way about themselves and their futures. Colmers deserves staff and a Headteacher that believes bigger and higher and longer than anyone else so that families can be assured that when they leave their children with us we will match or even exceed their expectations.