

Pittwater House English Faculty



Ms Jill Brigden

Which book do you think everyone must read? Anything that hooks them into reading! Our library has millions of great new books!

Favourite TPHS memory? The day in Term 4 last year when Mr Abraham played the last bit of the Saint Saens 3rd symphony, a bit of original steampunk on our incredible pipe organ. It certainly livened up the assembly!

Favourite place to go when not at school? Hamer Hall, Melbourne, when the brilliant MSO is in town.



Mr Graeme Hudson

I was always going to be... an English teacher. From when I was a very young child I loved listening to and reading stories. I was fascinated by storytellers and by my father's habit of quoting from stories, poems and Shakespeare. A love of a well-told tale is in the genes!

My favourite books... have helped make me the person that I am. I'd like to think there's a little bit of Winnie the Pooh, Charlotte the spider, Ron Weasley, Peter Pan, Atticus Finch and Puck in me. Then I'd be caring and interested in people, erudite, a loyal friend, curious, fair and just, mischievous and fun. But, just as in Literature, no-one's perfect!

If I wasn't a teacher I'd... want to be a Superhero....

Being a teacher means... that I spend nearly every day with young people whom I admire and respect – and that keeps me young!



Ms Lorna Probst

The reason I became a teacher... is because a teacher had been such a mentor for me, I wanted to work with young people and make a difference.

My favourite book is...*Tao Te ching* by Lao tzu it really is such an inspirational short story.

The books I most enjoyed teaching are...*Animal Farm* and *1984*. These books really have the students thinking about life today.

Literary Figures I would invite to my house are...Gerald Durrell, we would swap stories of Corfu. Naturally it would be a Greek mezze.

Amy Tan, her stories about the dual cultural experience and mother daughter relationships are a lovely read. I would serve her a multicultural feast.

If I had not become a teacher... I would have stayed in journalism.

Favourite TPHS memory...is walking around the playground seeing so many students happy to be here.

Standing at the airport watching the students return from a World Challenge adventure knowing it was an experience of a life time.

Favourite place to go to when not at school... is Corfu.

Three favourite possessions... are photos of family and items grandchildren have made.

Favourite hobbies... are reading and travel.

Earliest school memory... is standing at the back of a Year 5 class photo.



Mrs Anna Cameron

A few facts about me...After finishing a Communications Degree in Creative Writing in Sydney I decided to travel the world and be a freelance travel writer. It fortunately took me to Egypt where I took a teaching role in an International School on the Red Sea where I taught 5-6 year olds how to speak English. I also was a part of a children's circus and volunteered my time. I fell into teaching in this unique way and I knew it was my true path as I loved the reward you received when you witnessed an Egyptian or Bedouin child speak English purely due to your efforts. For me, teaching is all about helping students achieve their best, while maintaining strong values and setting them up for their future paths.



Mr Luke McKee

How I became a teacher... I feel very blessed to be a member of the English faculty at Pittwater House. I am passionate about teaching English and I want to give as much as I can to my role as the Year 7 Grammar Co-ordinator.

I have felt a natural inclination towards classical literature for a long time, because it is tried and true. *Paradise Lost*, a book published in 1667, is epic poetry at its finest and blew me away on my first reading. Its setting spans Heaven, Earth and Hell, and its twelve books were dictated by a blind poet. Amazing. Everyone should read *The Count of Monte Cristo*. It is an intelligently-written and gripping tale about how one man turns his life around in a remarkable series of events. It's so good!

I believe in learning for the sake of learning and I am sometimes taken by rather obsessive flights of fancy. One month I read all I could about art and Van Gogh. Over a two-week period I read all about Australian snakes and how to care for them. Right now, it's adventuring and surviving in the wild because I am looking forward to camp. These attributes, some perhaps expected, others secret until now, combine to create the character I bring to the classroom every day.



Miss Rachel Visser

How I became a teacher... I first realised that I really loved to teach when I was in my late teens and I was teaching little kids how to surf at Sydney North Surf School. After a couple of years, I felt like I was getting a bit too much sun and suffering from what I like to call "beach brain;" so I decided to begin my studies at university. I studied art history and English literature, and it seemed natural to combine my love of education with these two subjects which I am passionate about. My favourite book is *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. The books I most enjoy teaching at school are books related to modern history such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* or *Animal Farm*. The book that made me cry and shifted my understanding of the relationship between history and fiction, was a book by Edward P Jones called *The Known World*. If I had not become a teacher I would have liked to have gone into art restoration or art history. My favourite TPHS memory so far, was when the C9O girls broke into the school song as we trekked up a massive mountain in the hot sun last Thursday at camp. My favourite place to go when I am not at school is definitely the beach. My favourite hobbies are surfing, swimming and running, and my favourite possessions are my surf boards and my books. My first memory of Pittwater House was in kindy when I was selected to be a brick in a musical production of *The Three Little Pigs* performed in the Great Hall.



Mr John Anderson

How did you come to be a teacher? I remember feeling a bit lost at high school, not feeling particularly cared for. That changed a little in my final few years due to the efforts of some of my teachers. I remembered their kindness and the positive impact it had for me. I believe that was the catalyst for my teaching career.

Your favourite book/writer? I was fascinated by Shakespeare when I read him for the first time. I was also fascinated by the age he wrote in. Shakespeare became my major at university; I enrolled in courses focused on his comedies, histories and tragedies.

The books I most enjoy teaching at school are... Shakespeare's plays and poetry. I also like helping students to explore his world so they are able to better comprehend his genius.

Which book do you think everyone must read? Getting away from Shakespeare for a moment, I think *Cloudstreet* by Tim Winton is essential reading.

Which literary figures would you invite to your house for dinner, and what would you serve? Shakespeare, obviously. I would also love to chat to Tim Winton and Marcus Zusak.

If I had not become a teacher, I'd like...to have been a paramedic, though I doubt I would have been tough enough to cope with the tragedy I would be exposed to.

Your favourite TPHS memory...A student once gave me a 'wordle' with every literary device she had learned by the end of her year with me. I was amazed.

Favourite place to go when not at school?: Surfing at Longy!

What are three of your favourite possessions? - Aside from surfboards I don't own a lot of 'things'. My greyhound 'Boof' is a retired racing dog who brings our family a lot of joy. Watching him go for 'zoom' is quite breathtaking.

Earliest (or early) school memory? - Not wanting to let go of my mother's hand at the door to my Kindergarten classroom.



Mrs Alex Valentine

Earliest memory from school... is running in the Foundation Day relay when I was in kindergarten at Pittwater House. I recall lots of shouting, flag-waving and feeling as though the circumference of the oval was the longest distance in the world!

The books I most enjoy teaching at school... are those that challenge students' expectations and inspire an appreciation of the composer's craft. I love teaching texts that reflect the complex world around them and have the potential to activate change. Specifically, I have enjoyed teaching Orwell, Atwood, McEwan, Beckett, Shelley, Plath, Bradbury and many others! I've also enjoyed teaching Gothic literature, crime fiction, science fiction, dystopian fiction, Absurdist plays, anything post-modern, Romantic texts (from the Romantic period, not love stories!) and war literature.

Favourite hobby... is photography. I do a lot of landscape and macro photography in my spare time. I also love to travel and photograph my adventures. My favourite places to photograph have been: New Zealand, Japan, Scotland and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. I am currently dreaming of photographing Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands.



Ms Carly Biddolph

My favourite author... is Tim Winton. I'm so jealous of his ability to capture raw and authentic human experiences through imagery.

If I wasn't a teacher, I would be... a veterinarian because I love animals, especially my four cats.

Favourite hobby? I'm extremely passionate about travel, with some of the most memorable places I've explored being Peru, Iceland, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as my second home, Manchester.



Mr Adam Hine

I decided I wanted to pursue teaching... after being a mentor for three indigenous young men who were on scholarships at a school in Adelaide.

My favourite book is... *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

I most enjoy teaching... Shakespeare's plays. It is wonderful to see the students recognise the universality of his works, especially his tragedies.

The book that changed my life... was *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith.

I think everyone should read... *Cloudstreet* by Tim Winton.

I would like to invite... Milan Kundera, Hermann Hesse, Donna Tartt, James Joyce, and Zadie Smith over for dinner. I would serve them a fish tagine.

If I hadn't become a teacher... I'd be a journalist.

My favourite TPHS memory... would be teaching Hamlet to my Year 12 class last year.

My favourite place to go when not at school... is the beach.

My three favourite possessions are... my 9'2 longboard, my tagine and my van.

My favourite hobby... is surfing.

My earliest school memory... was playing basketball.