



Herschel Grammar School Alumni



Bhavik Barochia
Digital Water Consultant, Arup

I'm a Consultant in Arup's Digital Water Team, supporting a diverse range of clients such as government agencies, health organisations, and the water sector. Specialising in health monitoring systems for humans, animals, and the environment, I integrate digital solutions to inform government policies and help organisations make decisions all over the world, harnessing water as a source of data. With a background in biological research, I help turn research into innovative solutions to shape a better world.



Lena Grasselli Nicol
Doctor, NHS

I graduated from Medical school at the University of Nottingham in 2021 and I'm now working as a junior doctor in Acute Medicine. This involves looking after patients who have been newly admitted to hospital. I'm currently studying for a postgraduate diploma and in the long-term I plan to specialise in Palliative Care.



Jesse Cross

Software Developer – Commodities and Global Markets,
Macquarie Group

Post HGS sixth form I took a gap year; spending the first half of the year working as a bartender in Slough and the second half volunteering with the International Citizens Service (ICS) in Lusaka, Zambia. I then went on to undertake my four-year degree in Physics with Theoretical Physics (MSci) at Imperial College London. My final year master's project was in computational astro-statistics where I used Bayes' Theorem for parameter estimation and model comparison on different theoretical models. The models are individual attempts to describe the formation of the first stars in our Universe and by using Bayesian statistics we were trying to determine which is the most likely to be true. Since 2021, I have worked at Macquarie Group as a software developer in front office risk. My job involves coding in both Python and C++ on our internal app to support the energy trading business.



Gary Newbury

Business Partner and Delivery Executive, RetailAID Inc.

I run an independent business practice (RetailAID Inc.) since moving here to Canada in 2012 focused on turning around B2C Supply Chain and Logistics organisations, having had a very successful career as interim CFO, CEO and CSCO roles within well known businesses across the UK, helping organisation to make big change happen fast to drive enduring competitive advantage. Lucky breaks, a commitment to continuous learning, applying my knowledge to adeptly influence behaviours in others are the three assets that have driven success for me.



Idris Shaffiq
Certified Financial Planner, Atmos

Went to University to study Accounting & Finance, fell into Financial Services soon after graduation, took 17 different exams along the way and grew my career managing people's personal finances and helping them meet their life goals!



Alex McKeown
Chartered Civil Engineer

Studies

Attended Loughborough University getting a masters in Civil Engineer. As part of this, I did a placement year in Malaysia.

First Contracting role

From my time at Kier UK I built on my professional ability to safely manage construction works and engineering. Working on projects such as Broadmoor Hospital Redevelopment and the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station. Furthermore I became Chartered with the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Working Abroad

Following this I wanted to gain a greater breadth of knowledge/experience and moved into Tunnelling work whilst in Washington DC.



Farid El-Aouadi
Software Engineer, Partners Capital

Develops internal software for a hedge fund.

Learn to code, possibilities are endless...



Katie Chapman
Senior Financial Planning and Analysis Manager,
IRIS Software Group

After university, I went into a finance graduate programme allowing me to rotate between different finance functions. I levitated towards the financial planning & analysis area (future looking). After 5 years with one company; I went to explore different company types (Private Equity, FTSE 100, private-owned) and soon found I most liked the PE-backed companies and worked my way up from Analyst to Business Partner to Senior Manager. My current role involves managing a small team responsible for the forecasting, budgeting, variance analysis among many other things for the operations side of the business.



Steven Burnett
Senior Firmware Engineer, Arm

In a previous life I was an engineer officer in the Navy, and I spent almost 6 months continuously underwater on a submarine deployment. After I'd had my fill of avoiding the sun I re-entered the civilian world as an embedded software engineer, which means that I get hands-on with electronic devices and think a lot about microcontrollers. At Ring I worked on the battery powered doorbells and cameras, and now at Arm I work on creating new mobile GPUs. Never content to just sit at a desk all day I'm also training to become a firefighter (as of Jan 2024).



Cindy Wong
Management Accountant
Lavazza Professional

HGS Alumni
2002-2009



Joanna Dobson
Head of Mathematics

From school I went to University in Portsmouth to study Mathematics then did a PGCE at Brunel. Since starting teaching I have held the roles of Teacher of Mathematics, Head of House, Second in Mathematics and now Head of Mathematics. In the way I have done a number of training courses and changed school just twice. My role now includes teaching, resource management, resource creation and data analysis as well as leadership of my team. I have also been heavily involved in the Duke of Edinburgh award and have both launched it in schools, developed existing school programmes and supported other staff in the running of the programme.



Shajee Butt

Head of Financial Planning & Analysis,
Norsk European Wholesale Ltd

After completing my GCSE's at Herschel (2011), I tried to do my A-Levels at another institute. Unfortunately, I was hit by major health complications and was unable to complete them. In 2013, I ventured down the apprenticeship route in Accounting.

Just over 10 years later, I am at the same company I started with, going through all the different areas of Accounting and Finance from Credit Control to Management Accounting. As of 2018, I am the head of the entire team, working very closely with the CFO.



Freddie Hoskins
Recruitment Consultant, Reed Recruitment

After nearly four years of working in the Slough & Windsor property market, I decided to transfer my sales skills and passion for helping others into Recruitment. I enjoy representing local talent and helping them to find the best employment opportunities in the area - It's a really rewarding job.



Caleb Lacey
Property Developer

Landlord and Property
Developer in the Slough Area



Aaron Gumbs
Head of Digital Platforms, Microsoft Partner

I pursued software development after university and started working for a small business that developed solutions on top of Microsoft's enterprise applications. I worked my way up the ranks from graduate to senior before taking on my first team several years ago in the enterprise space, and I now head up the practice for digital development, internal IT, and InfoSec at a Change Management organisation who deliver upon the Microsoft 365 stack.

Some advice from someone who wasn't great at exams would be to take advantage of free practical resources such as developer environments and applied skills assessments, and also share your work early to explore the relevant industry's community. My last three and most successful roles have been achieved through networking, and I've thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it!



Ansh Bhatnagar

Postgraduate Researcher in Theoretical Particle Physics, Durham University

My research is in the intersection of particle physics and cosmology, trying to answer questions such as: why is there more matter than anti-matter? What is dark matter? Can we learn more about particle physics by observing gravitational waves from the beginning of the universe?



Hamzah Awan
Mergers and Acquisitions Analyst, BPP

Hi all! I started Herschel way back in 2009... fast forward and I have a First-Class in both BSc Finance & MSc Finance despite doing horrible in my A-Levels... I've worked as a 'Strategy Analyst' and am currently in M&A. I started 'The Atypical Podcast' with 3 best-friends from Herschel which recently hit it's 2-year anniversary. Do what you enjoy & be relentless, it'll pay off.



Jamie Wykes

SEN Teaching Assistant, Primary School

I left Herschel to study Sports and Exercise Science at Swansea University, after a gap year working and travelling. After COVID I fell into a TA job at a local SEN autistic specialist primary school and have been there ever since, working for 2 years before deciding to travel around SE Asia, Australia and New Zealand for 4 months. I then returned (April 2024) and pursued a Teach for Tomorrow course with the aim of becoming a teacher.



Ashley Green

Financial Analyst, Altor Wealth Management

I was one of the few people in my year who decided not to go to uni because I just couldn't decide what career to go down. Having worked in event management, at an exam board and for 7 years now the financial services industry I've realised you don't always need to decide as it isn't one set end point. Your career can take many twists and turns and be equally successful as long as you're working hard.



Sammara Baig
Senior Pre Sales Technical Specialist, Microsoft

I am a Senior Pre-Sales Technical Specialist here at Microsoft USA, based out of Houston, Texas. I started my career with Microsoft in the UK headquarters and moved across the pond coming up to two years ago. My role entails me to work with the Microsoft Dynamics Finance software specializing with Retail and CPG customers. I am involved in demoing the solution to potential customers, presenting to them the solution to their problems and the value behind the solution. The aim is to sell the software to the customer. My job allows me to travel throughout the US to meet potential clients and present to them face to face. I am lucky enough to work with wonderful client like Starbucks, Costco, and Louis Vuitton to name a few.



Raj Khade
Analytics Team Lead, Sapphire Systems

After completing my degree at UCL, I joined a Consulting firm called Capgemini. Worked in the FP&A (Financial Planning & Analysis) team, where I learnt various things about how a project is run. I was enjoying my time at Capgemini and realised 8 years had passed, which saw my role evolve to a Senior Planning Consultant. Recently I changed roles and have joined Sapphire Systems another consulting firm, where I am the Analytics Team Lead.



Kaja Milczewska
Environmental Public Health Scientist,
UK Health Security Agency

My career so far has mostly been shaped by indecision and grabbing opportunities when they arise. At HGS, I was absolutely sure that I was going to be a journalist, but fortunately I realised my love for maths and physics, which I ended up studying at Warwick. After graduating, I went on to do a PhD in meteorology and air quality at Reading - a juicy project to get stuck into over four years and work closely with the Met Office. Since then I've been working as an air pollution scientist in the civil service - honestly not something I could have ever foreseen, it just sort of happened!

I don't have a wise quote to share, but stay in touch with your school friends, they could be the best ones you'll ever have. And don't ignore all your extra-curricular activities! Of course I enjoy my job, but outdoor sport, music, photography and volunteering have enriched my life more than my job ever will. Take that gap year if you can - I really, really wish I had.

And if you don't see yourself represented in something you want to do: become that person for someone else. I wish I had a female role model while studying the subjects I did. Get more girls into STEM!



Michi Canali
Lead Finance Business Partner,
Ministry of Justice UK

The MoJ is responsible for running the UK's prison, probation and court services. Each of these three areas have a team of finance business partners who manage their finances. I sit across the prisons and probation space, leading a team who manage the finances for any projects which bridge those two areas. The day-to-day work includes reviewing bids for the building of any new prisons, drafting various briefings and letters of advice to Ministers including the Lord Chancellor, and meeting with various policy-makers to ensure they are using tax-payer money appropriately.



Peter Melkowski
Founder and Owner,
Market Ready, Print Signage and Embroidery

I left Hershel High School (as it was then known) in 1982 and enrolled at Berkshire College of Art and Design on a print course. Found work locally as a printer and quickly went on to set up my own printing company from my home in 1985.

Expanded the business, moved to Peterborough where it continues to this day.

At it's height, I employed up to 22 people. I am now reducing numbers as I approach retirement.

My career in printing started with Miss Smith, my art teacher at Herschel High, who inspired me to apply for the college course and to whom I will be eternally grateful.