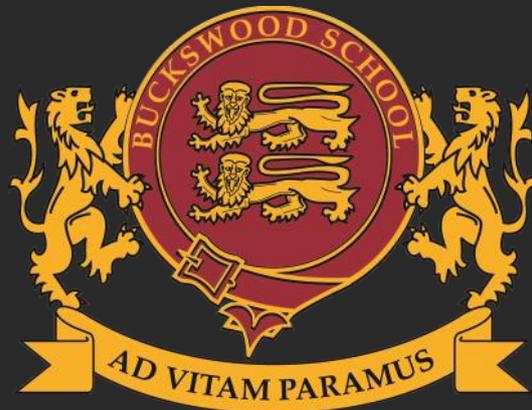


Take Ten

Over the next few weeks we want to share the breadth of experience and expertise of the Buckswood Masters and Mistresses. Many have led extraordinary lives and have had different careers before joining Buckswood, which makes their teaching all the richer:

This isn't just education, this is Buckswood education!



Name: Michael Lawless

Subject: Science/Environmental Science/Physics

1. Where did you spend your childhood?

I grew up in an Army family, so we moved around the world a fair amount. However I went to a boarding school from an early age in Surrey and then Kent.

2. If you had not become a teacher what profession or trade might you have followed?

When I was younger I always wanted to become a Vet or an African game park ranger. However a lot of my close friends joined the Army and upon reflection had I not become a teacher I would have joined them in the Army.

3. In what ways has experience gained beyond the school gate assisted in the education of your students?

I have had a number of other professions before working at Buckswood and have had the opportunity to develop a variety of experiences that assist me in educating our students, for example as well as being a qualified teacher I am also a qualified solicitor, and was in the Territorial Army for almost 9 years. Whilst at university I served on the local RNLI lifeboat and worked with the Ambulance service. I have also played rugby to a relatively high level, representing Kent, South of England and England Law Society in the first 'Lawyers World Cup' in Paris. All of these opportunities have broadened my horizons and enable me to deliver a richer and more varied education to my students.

4. What's your most significant professional achievement to date?

Being dyslexic, I can't say that I found academic study easy, so achieving my first degree in Marine Environmental Science was very important to me, however going to law school and against the odds qualifying as a solicitor and working for some of the best law firms in the country has to have been the most significant professional achievement to date.

5. What do you enjoy most about being part of the Buckswood family?

I think the unique nature of Buckswood makes working here very exciting. It is a very dynamic environment; one where you get out of it as much as you put into it. Whether it is looking after our chickens, building organic gardens, or thinking of exciting ways to breakdown and explain a particularly complex scientific idea to student who has never spoken English before.... you are always kept on your toes. Being an independent school, the fact that we can explore areas and concepts that that otherwise in a state school we would not be able, makes this an energetic and interesting teaching environment here very rewarding.

6. Where in the world would you most like to visit for the first time?

When asked a question like this I am always stuck for answers because there are so many places that I would like to go. I am always divided between mountains I would like to climb, or rivers I would like to paddle, but then my wife gently reminds me that if 'we' were to go somewhere it would have to be somewhere hot and sunny!! I have never been to Vietnam or Thailand and I think I would find this area of the world a fascinating place to explore, by land and by kayak!!

7. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I am a keen outdoor sports person and I split my spare time between sea kayaking, mountaineering, mountain biking and sailing. I run the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) scheme at Buckswood, so when I'm not running up and down mountains or taking part in kayaking expeditions, I am often busy helping out with the DofE. I also have my yacht masters and so whenever I get a chance I love to go sailing.

8. Who, living or dead, has had the most profound and positive effect on you as a person?

I learnt an awful amount from one of my Army instructors. He was a very highly decorated warrant officer from the Parachute Regiment, who taught me a lot about leadership and self-development. He was the sort of chap that had the highest of standards and took no nonsense from any one. He mentored me through the Officer Training Corps, resulting me in being awarded the Sword of Honour and in the process absorbing his outlook on life. In life one comes across many people and one normally finds that the: exceptional; very good; or weak tend to stick in your mind over the years. He was exceptional.

9. What do you think are the qualities that make a great schoolmaster/mistress?

I think energy and enthusiasm are crucial components to successful teaching. Not only does a great teacher need to know their subject, but they also need to be able to engage, inspire and help their students to learn, both inside and outside the classroom. A great education is one that focuses on not just academia, but one that also provides opportunities for extra curricular opportunity. I try to utilise all of the skills and experiences that I have been fortunate to have to, to think outside the box make science exciting to all student.

10. How would you most like to be remembered by former students?

I hope that I will stick in the minds of my students for having been some one that is exciting and fun, as well as being someone that will always make the time to help them, whatever the problem.

