



# FARNHAM COLLEGE

Celebrating 50 years -  
Student stories from  
1973-2023



# 1970's - Rosemary

## Specialist Teacher and Assessor at Activate Learning

Rosemary studied A Levels and extra O Levels in 1978.

Rosemary said: "If I hadn't gained the qualifications that I did at Farnham College I would not have been able to go to university when I did."

"Being at Farnham College gave me a love of learning and the subjects I was encouraged to study there changed the options open to me. The teachers I had were very inspirational as I am sure those teaching there now are too!"



# 1980's - Fiona

## Faculty Co-ordinator (Landbased) at Activate Learning

Fiona studied her O Levels at Farnham College from 1985 to 1986.

She is Faculty Co-ordinator for the Landbased faculty and is also part of the timetabling team at Activate Learning.

Fiona said: "Gaining the extra qualifications enabled me to apply for a job in the Civil Service which led to a varied career, spanning over 31 years.

"I have been able to put in practice the skills I developed during that career in my current work."





# 1990's – John

## Head of Blog and Education at PokerStars



John studied Business at Farnham College from 1995-1997. He now works as Head of Blog and Education at PokerStars.

"It was an absolutely remarkable experience. The tutors were excellent and genuinely cared about you and your future, and the social times were equally impressive."

"Whilst you're learning your chosen subject you also learn micro skills such as working in a team and learning to work with different people you usually wouldn't, which

is invaluable for life after education.

At college I was also lucky enough to get my work experience at IBM, one of the biggest Tech Companies of its time."

John has been with his current company for 18 years. He moved through various roles, gaining experience in Marketing and Events, setting up departments, to where he is today.



**I've been lucky enough to travel the world through this company and meet some of the most talented people in the industry from business, marketing, TV, events, SEO, social media, ambassadors, celebrities and more."**



"What drew me to this career path was the idea of mixing business with strategy. I joined PokerStars when the industry was brand new, so have seen it grow from a start-up to a billion-pound industry."

"It's amazing to see a successful start-up grow, and very rewarding to have been a part of its growth. Start-ups can be risky to work in, but you also develop your skills much faster as you get to experience so much more."

John shared some of his proudest achievements and memorable moments since attending Farnham College.

John said: "The confidence I gained from college took me on many adventures. I created a small ecommerce and affiliate business when I left which allowed me to pursue some other passions."

"I was a Radio DJ for Glastonbury, I played Poker on TV in Las Vegas, beating a Harvard Graduate heads up for 1st place, Farnham College 1 – Harvard 0."

"I then moved from my small hometown to city life in London and grew my career further. I am immensely proud of how far I've come."

Even if you've not fully chosen your career path, don't be afraid to explore new things, try to network and choose friends with similar goals and interests," John said.

"Knowing people with the same career goals really helps, as you can bounce ideas off each other and may even end up in the same company or sector."

"Learn from each position in your career, understand what works well, what could be improved and what doesn't work, because one day you may be in charge of those decisions."

"Throughout my career I've found that people love problem solvers and there's not one thing that cannot be improved. If you're the go to person to solve those issues, you'll be the first person they will think of when a new higher role becomes available."

## 2000's - Steven

**Performing Arts and Music Technology  
Teacher at Activate Learning**

Steven studied A Levels and AS Levels from 2002-2004.

"I enjoyed my time at Farnham College. This was because the teaching staff were friendly and supportive. My Drama teacher, Duncan, was a real inspiration to me, encouraging me to take my passion for theatre further. My Physics teachers, Fred and Ted, were a great team and gave me a lifelong interest in science and in how the world works. Les, my Graphics teacher, was generous with his time and always had a supportive word.

"After studying Drama at university, I worked at The Farnham Maltings as a Lighting and Sound technician. I trained as a Drama teacher and did my teaching practice at Farnham College. After qualifying in 2013, I taught Performing Arts, Acting and Drama and later increased my portfolio to include both Media and Music Technology.

"I've always been proud of my students' achievements. Every



time they perform in their end of unit shows, I am filled with pride of their talent, effort and commitment.

"When I was a Farnham College student, I was very proud to be the recipient of 'The John Travers Award for Endeavour in Drama' in 2003 and 'The Davies Memorial Prize for Excellence in Drama' in 2004. "I recently received an Activate Learning Philosophy Award that reflects my own commitment to teaching and learning.

"I am happy that I have long been part of Farnham College and its unique story."

# 2010's – Lauren

## Schools Partnership Executive at Activate Learning



Lauren studied a Childcare and Education Level 3 Diploma from 2012 to 2015. She has now returned to Activate Learning to work as a Schools Partnership Executive.

Lauren always dreamed of working as a teacher and decided to study this course to pursue her career ambitions.

"I chose to study a Childcare and Education course to help me embark on my future career goal of

being a Primary School Teacher for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities."

Lauren shared some of her favourite things about studying at Farnham College and how it helped her personal and professional development.

"I really valued and enjoyed my experience whilst studying at the college because of its warm community and smaller learning environment.

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**"I enjoyed the experience of having many opportunities by attending lots of extra-curricular activities outside of class.**

**"This gave me the chance to express myself to ensure I was achieving my true potential,"**



"This made me feel happier at college and helped me become more confident. I loved how I could tailor the college life and learning environment to how I learn best, which helped me achieve my own personal goals.

After college, Lauren attended the University of Chichester and qualified as a Primary School Teacher with SEND students and worked as a teacher in various schools before returning to Activate Learning to work as a Schools Partnership Executive.

"Working as a SEND teacher in Primary Schools allowed me to explore different career pathways within education and led me to join Reading College within Activate Learning as a Schools Partnership Executive, where I have been in post for over a year now.

"I thoroughly enjoy my new role and feel very fortunate to help young people make their own choices about their options or goals when they leave secondary school.

"This has become a very rewarding role where I feel my courses I have studied, in particular at Farnham College can help me transfer my skills and knowledge to Further Education."

"My proudest achievement so far is achieving my Level 5 qualification in Supporting Students with Learning Difficulties and SEND.

"Having this qualification helps me feel more confident in my current role and when supporting any student in their own personal journey."

Lauren had some words of wisdom to share with college students that are about to embark on their next steps in their career.

She said: "My advice to current students would be to make the most of every opportunity within college and to ensure that they are proud of what they have achieved so far, as this can help them gain more confidence in their own decisions moving forward in their lives."



# 2020's - Torin

## Junior Social Media and Platforms Journalist at The Times and Sunday Times

Torin Budd completed his A Levels in Graphic Design, Media Studies and Photography at Farnham College in 2020. He now works as a Junior Social Media and Platforms Journalist at The Times and The Sunday Times.

Torin said: “My time at Farnham College was quite transformational. I started college not knowing what I wanted to do long-term, but I knew I wanted to play music and I thought I didn't want to go to university.

“The teaching staff were fantastic in providing support but also inspiring me to push myself and continue into university.

“In my second year at Farnham, I was the Student Union President of the Guildford College Group, which is a role I took great pride in.

“I thoroughly enjoyed representing the students and raising their issues on their behalf, as well as attending the NUS Conference in Glasgow in 2019.”



After finishing his studies at Farnham College, Torin went on to study Journalism at the University of Winchester.

“After studying at University for three years, I am now working as a Junior Social Media and Platforms Journalist at The Times and The Sunday Times,” he said. “My day-to-day tasks include everything from tweeting to over a million followers, to doing voiceovers for TikTok videos.

"My day-to-day tasks include everything from tweeting to over a million followers, to doing voiceovers for TikTok videos.

"Every day at work truly feels like a dream and one I have worked for since my time at Farnham College, as many of the skills I learnt during my time at the college are still applicable in my role today."

Torin shared his proudest achievement since attending college. He said: "Aside from achieving a 2:1 in my degree and working in my current job, my proudest achievement was to work as a touring musician during the summer of 2022.

"It was a dream come true to go on tour with people who chose me based on my ability they had previously seen. I am also proud to have had my footage from my time at university used by ITV Meridian."

Torin had some words of wisdom to share with students that are about to leave college and embark on their next steps.

He said: "My best piece of advice to college students is to follow their passion and keep an open mind. I had no idea I wanted to be a journalist until I happened to hang around after a Media Studies talk which ran into a talk about the Journalism University course I would later devote all my time to.

"If you do these two things, you will come across new experiences that you never thought would be possible. I believe that any goals will be achievable if you follow what you're truly passionate about."

