



ADVANCED STUDIES IN ENGLAND

ALUMNI NEWS, 2021



Director's Welcome

Greetings from Bath!

2021 goes down as the year in which (for many of us, and certainly for ASE) things started, at least, to *resemble* normality as we knew it, pre-Pandemic. That is, until about a month ago, when the arrival of (Bond villain) Omicron ushered back that familiar sinking feeling...



I write to you at the end of a week of disappointing and escalating Covid cancellations. Last Thursday, though the Autumn 2021 *Acting for the Stage* class were able to give a (brilliant) performance to a masked, socially-distanced gathering of their peers (and a few visiting parents) at The Chapel Arts Centre, we had to scrap our customary pizza and salad buffet and the – always entertaining, frequently revelatory – Open Mic part of the evening. On Friday, we called off Final Tea at the Abbey Hotel. (The virtual gathering on Google that replaced it was surprisingly fun, but couldn't compare with the posh event we'd scheduled, and there wasn't a clotted cream and jam scone in sight!) Finally, just this morning, I reluctantly pulled the plug on the ASE Staff Christmas lunch for the second year running. And goodness knows, every member of the Team at Nelson House richly deserved the traditional pub roast and tippie or two we'd lined up for them, after their dedication, resilience and sheer hard work this year!

Working with **Rob Jones** and the various contributors to this edition of the ASE Alumni News has provided me with welcome reason to remember, collate and celebrate the positive progress we've achieved as a Programme, and as a wider community, not only over the past 12 months but over ASE's lifetime.

What better way to start than with a glimpse of the rich student experiences we've continued to facilitate in the past year (despite Covid, we've hosted over 70)? (**Sam** and **Brielle**, both Autumn 2021 recipients of ASE Alumni Association scholarships, write on pages 13 and 15). We hear, too, from **Mike Ruiz**, leading ASE Alumni benefactor, on the exciting fund he's established to support LGBTQ+ students (page 12); an initiative that dovetails perfectly with the aims of a new post we've created, outlined on page 11 by our inaugural Rainbow Mentor, **Kara Chambers-Grant**. Defiantly positive accounts of working and teaching in Bath during the pandemic are provided by the only two US faculty who were able to join us in person in Bath this past summer - **Siouxie Easter** (page 25),

formerly of Wells College, and **Cassie Kircher** from Elon University (page 17). We're also delighted to introduce a film recently produced by alum **Cristin Stephens**; and a book on transatlantic romance by new faculty member **Frederica Noble**, who's helped us deliver seminar courses in Psychology this year – a first for ASE!

Two further articles lend a longer-term perspective to the narrative of progress and development. On page 20, our first ever second-generation student **Emma Steffan** and her mother **Nadine Steffan** compare notes on their respective ASE semesters, experienced almost 30 years apart; and on page 3 Emeritus Regius Professor of Greek **Chris Pelling**, until recently our Oxford-based Academic Advisor, looks back over the same three decades of 'American Students Everywhere'.

There's also a fond farewell (and LOTS of heartfelt thank yous!) from **Su Underwood** (page 8), who this summer swapped her desk in the front office at Nelson House for a sturdy pair of hiking boots and an all-weather tent, and set off on new adventures.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to share some seismic news that came too late for proper inclusion in this edition. Mr **Andrew Butterworth**, an ASE favourite ever since he began supervising internship and school placements, leading Day Trips, quirky city tours and pub crawls for the Programme in 2003, has just announced that the Autumn 2021 semester will be his last.

Rest assured that plans are already afoot for future articles and events to celebrate in style, on both sides of The Pond, the extraordinary impact Andrew has had on the lives of ASE students over the years!

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy 2022.

Jonathan

Jonathan Hope

ASE Dean and Director

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Rob's Round-Up

It has been so good to be back in the office, and teaching students face-to-face again. We had 20 with us this semester, from 15 different colleges, and we have over 50 students enrolled for the Spring (he writes, touching wood and with crossed fingers -which sort of explains the typos) which is absolutely marvelous!

There have been quite a few changes in the last few months, including the departures of ASE Staff Hugh Mclean and Sue Prutton, and, of course, of Su Underwood. With Andrew Butterworth also retiring in the new year, it really does feel like the winds of change are sweeping up and down the Nelson House staircase.

Of course, the wonderful thing about ASE is that no-one ever really *leaves*.

Whether students, faculty or staff, all become part of the alumni community, with regular opportunities to gather and, of course, an open invitation to morning coffee or afternoon tea in the staff kitchen at the top of Nelson House staircase. I have absolutely no doubt that Su and Andrew and the others will be seen again by us, and by you folks, in the not-so-distant future.

The dislocation of the pandemic has meant that various plans that we had made for the last 18 months were put on hold, and we will be picking these back up again as soon as we start to find the headspace, time and resources to do so. This includes, of course, the revamping of the frontage of Nelson House, towards which so many of you gave so generously. The funds sent have been ring-fenced, and I very much hope to be sending out an update and good news in the new year.

(dis)Continuing Education

For me, one of the most important and positive things during the lockdown period was organising and teaching on the Continuing Education programme. Not only did I get to share my enthusiasms with smart, and enquiring folks, but it also got me reconnected with some of you I hadn't seen for quite a while. From the feedback I received it is quite clear that you all felt the same way. My thanks to everyone for their support in this experiment; tutors, alums and the friends and family members that joined up.

Unfortunately (but not unexpectedly) the number of enrolments dwindled as things got back to normal in 2021, so this past Autumn was the last semester in which we'll be offering courses for the time being. It was a wonderful experience and we aren't abandoning it entirely. However, we are going to take some time to think about how we build on it to produce something valuable and desirable to you that still captures that ASE feel.



Meg the sheepdog; the newest addition to the farm!

Mentoring and Advice

An increasingly important and rewarding part of my job is answering requests from current students and alums looking for connections within the alumni community who can help them with advice and insights into grad studies. This informal mentoring scheme can pay dividends not only for those seeking advice but for those willing to give it. It is also a strength of ASE, and not something that all study abroad programmes can boast having. I'd like to build on these informal beginnings, so if you are prepared to give advice on grad studies, or indeed other professions, or if you are looking for advice, drop me a line.

Your Semester Virtually Reunited!

This summer Helene Schneider (Sp91, Skidmore) contacted us asking if we could host a reunion for herself and her classmates, 30 years on from their semester at ASE. We were only too happy to be able to host the virtual gathering which saw about half of the class, as well as Andy Venn, Jonathan and myself gather together to reconnect, share their news and their reminiscences and, in a couple of cases, realise that their old housemates were now living only a little way down the road!

This was so much fun that we wanted to extend the opportunity to all of you, in the course of time. To that end, we are going to offer virtual reunions for those semesters with key anniversaries (10, 20, 25 and 30 years) - so, Spring 2012, 2002, 1997 and 1992, you'll be getting an email from me very soon!

Website and Communications

Some of you will already have seen our [revamped main website](#). We developed it at the same time as our Continuing Education site, in order to bring it up to date both in terms of content and format. Unfortunately, this meant porting the Alumni section of the website to a new address to maintain the alumni database.

The process has not been, unfortunately, wholly successful. We have been having problems giving people access to past alumni newsletters and final tea slideshows. As a result, we are beginning the process of moving the alumni pages across to the new main site in order to give you access to the newsletters and slideshows once again. This will be combined with the updating of our database and email systems.

As the project progresses, I will be creating a survey for you to complete so that we can refresh our records, and be more particular about the kinds of emails you get from us. All of this should mean stronger and more meaningful connections with all of you and within the alumni community.

All the best

Rob

Rob Jones- r.jones@asebath.org

ASE Alumni Association Co-ordinator

Goodbye to All That: Thirty Years at ASE

After more than three distinguished decades as ASE's Academic Advisor, 2021 saw Professor Chris Pelling beat a well-earned retreat to his book-lined Man Cave on the outskirts of Oxford.



'American Students Everywhere', as was once heard murmured at the Theatre Royal during yet another visit. But American students were by no means everywhere back in late 1989, when I was first approached to act as the Oxford link for the infant ASE. It was over lunch in Bath, with Don Nunes, the founder and first Director, and a newly arrived Barbara White, demure and on her best behaviour. I would like to say that I got used to the second, but many readers will know Barbara far too well for that to be plausible. After an earlier venture, Don was convinced that a connection with an Oxford college would be important, and University College seemed to fit the bill. I was glad to do what I could, and 32 years on I am still so grateful to have been asked.

We have come a long way. In the first semester in early 1990, there were 11 students; it was well before the days of Nelson House, and I remember giving classes in a rather stuffy upstairs room some way up the hill. I had always enjoyed teaching American students, who are much more willing to chip in to class discussion than their Oxford equivalents, and I never minded talking about Greek and English tragedy; I had published a little by then on Shakespeare as well as on Greek, and welcomed the rare chance to talk about both together. Things have changed a little since, but mainly in size; the feel of the programme remains very much the same, with an emphasis on small classes and personal interaction, a fair number of Oxford-based tutors and some time spent in Oxford itself, and most important of all a warm, friendly, and supportive staff in Bath. The nostalgic affection felt by so many alumni and alumnae – always more alumnae than -i, it must be said – is testimony to that.

More things have changed in my own academic life than in ASE, and my appointment as Regius Professor of Greek in 2003 meant that I was no longer in a position to give classes; but my association continued, and it has been fascinating to see ASE go from strength to strength – sufficient strength now to survive all the troubles of the pandemic, and to bounce back with resilience and vigour. I will have so many happy memories; heated debates in classes; Barbara White announcing at breakfast in Oxford that she knew what had happened the night before and would expect someone at her room at 9.30 to answer for it, only to be confronted by 14 people owning up to different misdemeanours; Mike Nicholson telling many an Oxford dinner about Luke St John-Plomondely, his pedal-driven tuba, and his sad end at Little Big Horn; Leslie Mitchell surprising his audiences by saying how much Oxford owed to Hitler; Jonathan Hope and his Dad-dancing as David Bowie in the Univ bar; the fear of haunted rooms at

Univ (my quip that we normally charge extra for those did not go down well); those mid-semester interviews and the recurrent comments that the books (a) were too long and (b) did not have enough sex; and those many, many cases of falling in the river.

I'm most grateful to you all: to the successive Directors, who have all been exactly the right people, in their different ways, to deal with the changing worlds they faced – Don Nunes, Ann Nunes, Barbara White, and now Jonathan Hope; to all the staff through the different generations, who have done so much to make ASE the distinctive experience that it is; and, above all, to you students, for you are really the ones that ASE is all about.

Mind y'all come back!

Tributes and Reflections from Chris's Friends at ASE

“Had you told the 18-year-old me, who first met Chris Pelling as an exceptionally distinguished tutor at University College Oxford, that one day we would be colleagues on a programme which brought people together across the Atlantic to share their love of learning, exploration and community, I would have been beyond astonished. In the almost 30 years since then, Chris has been unfailingly generous and influential in equal part. Not only is Chris a scholar of the very highest renown, he's also something yet rarer: an academic about whom not one single person has anything bad to say, and that's simply because there is nothing bad to say. Integrity, commitment, seriousness, playfulness - they're all there in his teaching, research and leadership. If only he supported the right cricket team then truly he would be a paragon of virtue. In a career packed with activity, Chris has maintained a deep commitment to ASE, and to all of its students and staff. Even though he has now stepped down from his formal role, I never bump into Chris in Oxford without his asking after ASE. To say that he's a hard act to follow is a grave understatement.”

- **Andrew Bell**, (*Senior Tutor, University College, Oxford and the new Academic Advisor for ASE*)

“The news of Chris Pelling's retirement from his role as ASE's Academic Advisor has triggered many memories and feelings for me. I am sad to think he has retired but full of admiration and gratitude for the range of roles he has played and the many contributions he has made to the development of the Programme across 30 years.



I think back to 1989 when my late husband, Don, had embarked on an ambitious plan to create a study abroad Programme for American undergraduates that combined the beauty and independence of Bath and the dramatic charge of Shakespearean Stratford-upon-Avon with the scholarly excellence of Oxford and its University. The agreement of Dr Chris Pelling, then Senior Fellow in Classics at University College, Oxford, to become ASE's Academic Advisor was a huge *coup* and an important foundation stone in the creation of ASE's identity.

Chris has been no mere figurehead, however, important as that role is; he has advised on policy, given tutorials, interviewed cohorts of students at the semester's end, met with ASE's Academic Board members, given speeches, hosted students and staff in Oxford and much, much more. He has seemed tireless and eternally cheerful. He has been a friend. It is hard to do justice to the deeply significant, positive and enduring impact Chris has had on ASE.

So, Chris, on behalf of the whole ASE family and especially on behalf of Don, I salute you, thank you and wish you every happiness."

- **Ann Nunes** (ASE Director Emerita)

"Professor Pelling made an impression even though I only met him a couple of times. Before attending ASE, his name and certainly his credentials came up in my research about the ASE program. His being an accomplished academic and at Oxford lent credibility to the program, and formed my image of the professor as one of solemn expertise. In meeting Professor Pelling during our Oxford residential, I found he was charming, friendly, and funny. He even recommended a shop to get some Univ souvenirs, namely a tie and tie clip. I wish Professor Pelling a wonderful retirement, and send my thanks for his contributions to ASE over the years."

- **Mike Ruiz** (Sp98, HWS)



"What first comes to mind when I think of Chris and ASE is long, gentle hours being kindly ferried between Oxford and Bath by Chris in his car on a Friday afternoon for the start of term Staff Meeting. I'd marvel at how Chris has the ability to listen with genuine interest and to find points of connection, no matter how unexpected or idiosyncratic the turns the conversation takes! I also learned far more about cricket than I had ever expected.

I also remember his exceptional ability to put nervous students, who had only arrived in the country a few days before and whose wine glasses would almost be trembling with their nerves, at their ease when they first met him in the beautiful surroundings of the Museum/Gallery [insert name of building here!] in Bath, with his particular blend of avuncular kindness and approachability. He somehow managed to convey that high academic standards would be expected without question, but not make the students feel overwhelmed. Any students that were at that point feeling intimidated by the prospect of 'Oxford' tutors would be immediately put at their ease by Chris.

At the termly Oxford dinner – he was the master of the after-dinner speech. I loved how he would hint at students' escapades during their Oxford week without ever saying anything too identifying or embarrassing! He managed to

make Oxford both imposing and accessible – no mean achievement."

- **Liz Sawyer**, (*ASE Classics Tutor and one of Chris' students at Oxford*)

"We can make it all a little less solemn and a little less dull." So said Chris Pelling in the coda to his masterful work on *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian*, addressing the 'invention' of the historians and playwrights who shaped our study of and fascination with ancient Greece. Much the same can be said about Chris in his capacity as Academic Advisor to ASE ("ACE," as Chris pronounces it). His incisive thinking, his probing analyses, his warmth and wry/sly sense of humour, and, oh, those neckties, helped many an American student navigate the British educational system.



We (Michael and Leslie) relished our time with Chris at Oxford and Bath, and I (Michael) was routinely reminded that this kind and generous tutor was also, for a time, the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. His accomplishments as a scholar merited the honour, and his prolific outpouring of scholarship on ancient history, both Greek and Roman, reflect the erudition of an esteemed Oxonian don. ASE possesses the academic prestige and intellectual rigor in no small part because of Chris' work, but also because of his wise counsel to successive academic boards and ASE directors. Indeed, his skills as a navigator were particularly on display as ASE began its relationship with Franklin & Marshall College. He was the Homeric *πολύτροπος* (*polutropos*), the man of many twists and turns, throughout his years as the link between the Oxford tutors and ASE. Chris, thank you for making our experience with ASE "a little less solemn and a little less dull."

- **Michael Arnush and Leslie Mechem**, (*Professors in Classics at Skidmore College, NY, and ASE Summer tutors*)

Both at Washington and Lee University (where he has been a familiar figure since at least the 1990s), and on site in Bath and Univ, Chris Pelling is known for droll humor, academic distinction, lightly-worn erudition, and sincere interest in students' international opportunities. When he trains the beam of his attention on a conversation partner, that person feels warmth and inclusion. A discerning talent-spotter, Chris recruited generations of superb faculty to ASE. To be seated next to Chris at a meal - are we really eating boiled celery in a white sauce? - is to win the lottery.

- **Suzanne Keen** (*VPAA & Dean of Faculty, Hamilton College. President-Elect, Scripps College*)

"I am delighted to have been asked to write a few words about Professor Chris Pelling who has played such an instrumental part in ASE's development during his 30-year association with the Programme as its Academic Advisor.

You will remember him as the person who officially welcomed you to Bath and ASE at our reception in orientation week, who presided over our formal dinner at Univ and who met with you all individually at mid-semester to talk about your courses.

But behind the scenes, Chris contributed so much more, placing his stamp of academic excellence on our Programme. He played a pivotal role in guiding all aspects of ASE, in liaising with US colleges and in his masterly control of our annual Academic Board meetings. On a personal level and as Director of Studies, I always valued his carefully considered advice on academic matters and marvelled at his ability to find us a constant stream of talented and clever tutors to teach our ever-expanding curriculum. As Programme Director, however, I was especially grateful for the support and encouragement he gave to me and have fond memories of enthusiastic meetings as we planned ASE's future direction. The warmth and jollity of these meetings were in sharp contrast to my very first meeting with Chris at the beginning of the 90s when Don Nunes, the Programme founder, Chris and myself met to discuss an association with Univ. I was quaking in my very elegant shoes to find myself in the company of a Fellow and Praelector in Classics from Oxford!! He was bound to be a starched fuddy-duddy I thought– how wrong could I be!! Chris is great fun and a genius with one-liners!

Surprisingly, and although ASE kept him very busy, Chris also found time to pursue a distinguished career as Regius Professor of Greek at Christ Church (2003-15) and to author numerous works on Plutarch and aspects of Greek literature and history. Yet he has always worn his considerable scholarship lightly. I especially remember a lecture he gave to ASE students and his description of the death of Caesar as 'Infamy, Infamy, they have all got it in for me'. And only Chris could round off his account of his time in Greece when he was filming the life of Cleopatra with the words 'Lights, Camera, Actium'.

Chris has now handed these weighty reins to Andrew Bell who has already become a wonderful asset to ASE. This means that Chris will now have more time to write and indulge his passion for cricket. I am also hoping that, every now and then, he and I will get together for an Oxford lunch where I will attempt to understand the rules of cricket and Chris will feign an interest in David Bowie!!"

- **Barbara White**, (former Dean and Director of ASE)

Heading off on Su Adventures!

Su Underwood's welcoming face has greeted visitors and students to Nelson House for over 21 years; but in Summer 2021 she spread her wings and headed elsewhere...

Little did I know that when I started my job at ASE in January 2001, I would still be there 20 or so years later... I could have had a good few children in that time; but instead, I hosted over 2,000 thousand students!!

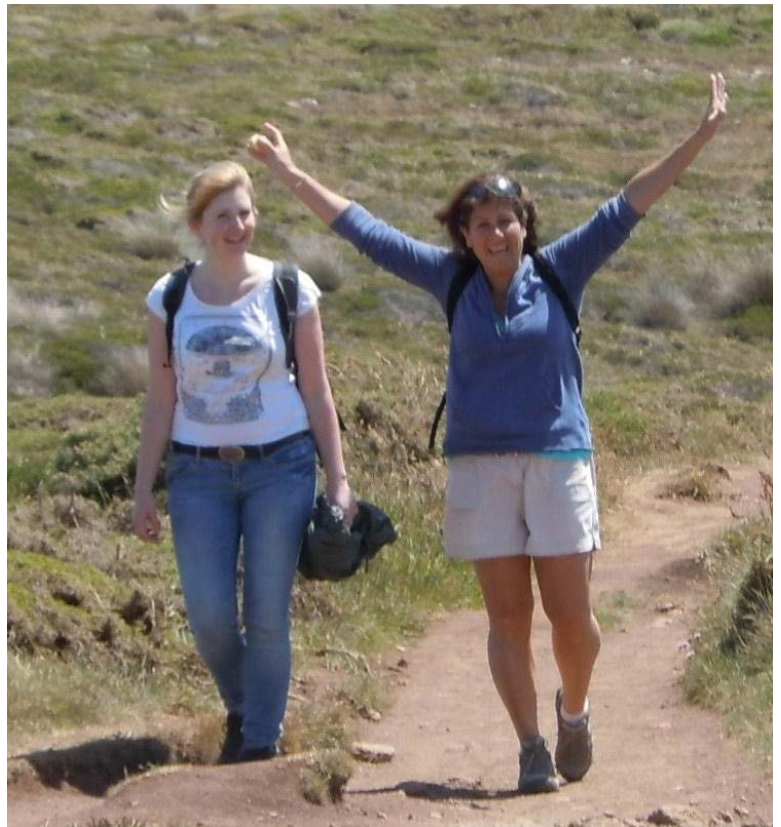
It felt natural to apply for the job vacancy at ASE. I had spent a year in the US at Milton Academy when I was 17 years old, followed by student life for four years back in the UK and nine seasons working in the travel sector in the French Alps and Greece. I remember thinking 'Gosh, how did I not know about this organisation? It looks fantastic!' Having been brought up in Bath, I thought I knew everyone and everything that went on in the city!

I was so excited about the prospect of working for such an operation and thought I would be perfect for the job. Unfortunately, ASE didn't think so...and they were probably right at the time! Having not been successful first time round, I reached out to Ann Nunes a year later to see if there were any vacancies and she suggested that I keep an eye out in the newspapers (yes, it was that long ago). And very soon there it was, an advertisement for a position at ASE! Well, I was beside myself and couldn't wait to reapply. To my delight, I was appointed. I was absolutely thrilled! I imagine it was my enthusiasm that got me the job...or just my tenacity in applying twice! It certainly wasn't my



admin experience, which was limited, although I had worked at Hallmark Cards for two and a half years. The rest is history, as they say!

I really do feel so lucky to have had the privilege of working at ASE for 20 and a half years and to have met all of you during this time. There has been much laughter throughout, along with some very fond memories that will always remain with me. I have had many wonderful colleagues along the way (most definitely including the grad and summer interns), who have been such fun to work with.



I have a whole host of ASE Staff to thank. Firstly, for taking that initial leap of faith and offering me the opportunity to work at ASE (an amazing woman who had the strength to take on the Directorship of ASE under such tragic circumstances: you can't imagine, Ann, how grateful I will always be!); Barbara White (an incredible and very special woman, including her great sense of humour and unwavering support); Andrew Butterworth (what can I say?...he has been an absolute ASE treasure and at ASE for nearly as long as me); the talented Jonathan Hope, for putting up with me for so long (and for successfully steering ASE through the difficult times, alongside F&M); Chris Pelling, who was ASE's Academic Advisor, Oxford for many, many years (also a hugely talented man, whose speeches I shall miss, along with his sense of humour and great support); Claire Jordan and Emma Hurry, who had to share an office with me for so long (and just about survived - though Claire did leave!). We have been through so much and still managed to laugh along the way! A special thank you to Emma for keeping me sane; to Peta Hall for being P (fiercely loyal, hard-working and always putting others first); Lindsay Orchard (an amazing person, professional and fantastic mother. I miss her!); Andy Venn (Mr Popular); Lucy Marten (who has been particularly incredible throughout the pandemic with the academic programme and has barely come up for breath); Rob Jones (a very charming man, who has done a great job of creating and developing ASE's Alumni Association); Rika Sterling (an absolute sweetie and the kindest nature); Hugh Mclean (great fun and someone I also miss!); and a very special thanks to Kara Chambers-Grant, as she stepped into my shoes when I left (an amazing and extremely capable woman, who has been invaluable to ASE throughout the pandemic).



I will also always treasure the memories of working with our ASE grad interns, including Stephen Weber and Jess Cubas (both amazingly welcoming and supportive of me when I first joined ASE), John Kernis (oh my gosh did we have some fun!), Kristin Peck (the kindest, sweetest, caring person), Liz Foster (such a big heart and was super supportive in my hour of need), and Meg Mascelli (wonderful and hilarious, what a combo!). They will always have a special place in my heart.

I must not forget to thank Franklin and Marshall College for their amazing support of ASE (and myself) and their extreme hard work, especially throughout the pandemic. In particular Sue Mennicke (Associate Dean for International Programs), Ali Janicek (Assistant Dean for International & Off-Campus Study), Alan Caniglia (Vice President for Strategic Initiatives), Karyn Jones (US Recruitment Coordinator, ASE), Claire Retterer (Adviser for Off-Campus Study) who have all helped ASE to survive.

I have also really enjoyed working with all the special and talented ASE tutors. Don't worry, I am not going to go

through every single tutor who ever worked for ASE (though I wish I could!).

As for all the students, they are the reason I stayed working at ASE for such a long time. I feel extremely lucky to have been invited to be part of their journey whilst in Bath. Such talented, hard-working, fun-loving, inspirational young adults! They have kept me young for sure, so I'm a bit worried I may age quickly now! I will miss meeting the new students but hope to keep in touch with some of you.

My final thank you absolutely has to go to the Nunes family, and in particular the late Don Nunes, the founder of Advanced Studies in England back in the 80s. His vision for ASE and the study abroad experience he wished to offer US students, and his passion for attracting a diverse student body were truly inspirational. Consequently, ASE has been extremely successful and has stood the test of time.



So, as you can see, I am extremely grateful full stop/period!

I wish everyone all the very best. Now go and spread your wings...I will be!

(Re-)introducing Kara Chambers-Grant, ASE's First Rainbow Mentor



Having been with ASE for nearly three years now, my title and day-to-day role has changed from managing student accommodations to administrative management of the programme. But, beyond the headline roles I have at ASE, my designation as Rainbow Mentor is a fairly recent

addition which really excites me! The Rainbow Mentor role was conceived and put into place just about the same time as the world changed due to Covid and we all began scrambling to readjust, so it's very much still in its early stages. However, I am hoping to be a resource to LGBTQ+ students during their study abroad experience - offering a listening ear, sharing my own experiences, signposting to community groups and activities, and providing a safe space where students can feed back about the Programme.

This opportunity for support doesn't replace our traditional mentor programme; it's meant as a supplement for students who reach out to us. All of the ASE staff are intent on being supportive of our students, and alums may recall that our open-door policy means that any student can come to any staff member with questions or concerns. However, we're mindful that students can sometimes feel more comfortable approaching a staff member or tutor who shares in part of their identity.

As a queer woman who came out (to others and to myself) later in life, ASE is the first work environment where I've been able to fully integrate those parts of myself. Being able to bring all of myself to the workplace without worry allows me to be more intuitive on the job and feel more a part of the whole ASE community. My hope is that ASE will be, for our students, a place where they can also bring all of themselves - to their classrooms, to social activities, to their households. And I'll be looking for ways to advocate for that!

At ASE, we are committed to a fully inclusive experience for our LGBTQ+ community members, but we also recognise that inclusiveness is a journey and not a destination. So, if you have any thoughts or ideas about how we can make the experience better for our LGBTQ+ students and alumni, we want to hear about it.

Kara with her wife Jo, from when they featured in a BBC article about how LGBTQ couple split housework more equally.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210309-why-lgbtq-couples-split-household-tasks-more-equally>

If you would like to be in conversation about how ASE can best serve our LGBTQ+ students, or just want to make a specific suggestion, you can reach out to Kara at: k.chambers-grant@asebath.org

ASE Scholarship News and Giving

Last year we announced the launch of [the Bridgetower Fund](#), which will provide valuable financial assistance to students of colour, facilitating participation in a broad range of enriching cultural activities and events. This joined a number of [longer-standing ASE scholarships](#) available to prospective students, named for the Programme's Founder Don Nunes and his wife and former ASE Director Ann Nunes, as well as the **ASE Alumni Scholarship** (you can hear from our Autumn 2021 recipients on the next page).

The generosity of **Mike Ruiz (Sp98, HWS)** has previously been marked by the naming of the Mike Ruiz Seminar Room at Nelson House. When Mike approached us wanting to set up a new scholarship for the LGBTQ+ community, we were delighted. After numerous transatlantic communications to work out the details, the Scholarship is now ready to launch, and we're delighted to hand over to Mike himself to introduce it...



The Mike Ruiz Scholarship - A new fund for LGBTQ+ students

It is my honor to announce the Michael Ruiz LGBTQ+ Community Scholarship with ASE.

This fund will help in making more accessible to the LGBTQ+ community the opportunity to study abroad at a program with excellent academics, and amazing social engagement.

As I reflect back to my time at ASE, way back in 1998, I was inspired by the welcoming and diverse nature of ASE, Bath, and England in general. It is increasingly clear how much of a positive and formative experience ASE was for me. These communities bring a growth and engagement opportunity for LGBTQ+ students. Increasing representation at ASE will also bring a positive influence to the program, fellow students, and beyond. I warmly invite any ASE alums who feel so inclined to support future generations of ASE students by donating to the Mike Ruiz fund themselves!

[Donations to all ASE Scholarships can be made here](#), via PayPal or the British Schools and Universities Foundation (which offers a means of tax-efficient donation). Please indicate your preferred Scholarship by including a note to Rob Jones.

If you'd like to set up a Scholarship of your own, please get in touch with Rob - r.jones@asebath.org

From the Autumn 2021 ASE Alumni Scholarship Recipients



Sam Scott (Colby College)

I have a feeling that, looking back, ASE will be the moment around which the rest of my college experience revolves; my months in Bath have been among the most enjoyable and formative of my life. Not only has the program and the generous contribution of the Alumni Scholarship sated my desire to travel, but they've provided me, oddly enough, with the first semblance of routine and normalcy I've had for some time now. I know that studying abroad is supposed to be something new and exciting and fundamentally different from routine, and it was all of those things, but on the heels of such an unmoored and malleable academic year, the experience felt decidedly comfortable. It was a weird, contextual luxury that I think we all hope will never be so luxurious again. But if we do run into another crippling pandemic, or if this one decides to come back for a

vicious sequel, like Apollo Creed in Rocky II, at least we'll know that there's a handful of students in Bath taking comfort in a program that gives them the chance to explore with the comfort of a reliable structure. I think this is telling enough as it is, don't you? How many 'Thank You' notes have you received which praise ASE's stable structure? Perhaps it's a testament to both the academic program and the whirlwind we feel finally passing.

But regardless of stability, I've discovered an experience here in Bath and the rest of the United Kingdom which has challenged me, shown me kindness, and helped me realize new and useful things about myself. Perhaps my favorite example, if not the most serious, is navigation: turns out, I'm pretty handy when it comes to directions. Sometimes I can't tie my shoes, but apparently I'm quick to develop reliable mental maps of new places. It was a skill I didn't realize I commanded until it became useful in Bath, Oxford, and Edinburgh, on three separate occasions. That, I think, is one of the best parts of the abroad experience, and I'm confident speaking for my peers on this front: we've received, merely by dint of moving to a different country and integrating with a society coming out of a pandemic like a bear rising from hibernation, a practical education concomitant with our classes. And don't get me wrong, I had some of the most enjoyable coursework of my life here, too, but being confused by Henry James doesn't quite deliver the emotional gratification of realizing that you can navigate strange places reliably, or that a chicken dinner actually isn't that hard to make, or even that beer goes down a lot easier when there are a few strange Brits cheering you on from the neighboring table. Don't tell ASE about that last one, though.

Point being, I'm writing to thank you for your generous donations, which made my experiences here in Bath and the United Kingdom possible. I'll be leaving a different person, and much for the better, I think. I've made great friends and learned invaluable things about myself and, yes, even about Henry James. Maybe it's best for me to end with a quick anecdote, one that I hope will express how comfortable and happy I've become in Bath, thanks to you. I'm writing this from a little place about five minutes from Nelson House called Good Day Café, a new, independent

coffee and brunch spot where I like to write. I'm on a first name basis now with almost all the staff, and usually, when I walk in, they take my order before I'm seated.

"Skinny latte?" they'll ask.

"Absolutely," I'll say. They'll bring my drink to me within a few minutes, and I'll finish the script by telling the person they're my hero. That's usually how it goes. But this morning I walked in, and there was a coffee waiting for me. It was the first time that has happened, and though I figured I was getting the remnants of a mishandled order, the staff's enthusiasm about their little surprise leads me to believe it was catered. It was touching, really, and one of the many experiences I'll remember fondly after the big man with his industrial-steel crowbar pries me away from Bath and ASE. Thanks a ton for all your help. I really appreciate it.



Brielle Perry (William and Mary)



I first heard about ASE in the form of a glorious interruption. I was sitting in my freshman seminar class at William & Mary discussing the absolutely riveting topic of dangling modifiers when, to my disappointment (excitement), the door of the classroom swung open. A woman explained that she was stopping by to share some information with us about a unique study abroad opportunity in Bath, England and proceeded to hand each of us a purple pamphlet. Intrigued, I read through the pamphlet instead of paying attention to the rest of the grammar workshop (Professor Hunnef, if you're reading this, I'm sorry). At that time, I wasn't ready to seriously consider studying abroad, but something inside me—a subtle, guiding voice that I couldn't discern then—moved me to keep that pamphlet, to tuck it into my desk drawer instead of recycling it alongside the 50 other handouts I had picked up earlier at the activities fair.

Then, a year and a half passed. I chose my major. I established myself on campus. And during the Spring of 2020, the world shut down. A massive interruption. Not something that any of us would have chosen or could have properly planned for. What I thought was my future paused, and I started to question everything. Now that I was older, thoughts of going abroad had begun circulating again, but I couldn't see how doing so would be possible. But one day, when I was sifting through old notebooks, I saw a purple piece of paper sticking its corner out from beneath a page. Looking for any distraction from cleaning I tugged and, sure enough, I found myself rereading the ASE pamphlet, this time with a new perspective. That small voice—the one that went quiet as we spiraled deeper into the pandemic and I started to lose hope in the legitimacy of opportunities—came back briefly, long enough to convince me to keep the pamphlet somewhere visible, somewhere close.

Since you're reading this, you've probably figured out that I made it to Bath. Just before I submitted my ASE application, I watched a video on the ASE website of ASE students describing their ASE experiences in three words each. Some of the terms that came up were supportive, exciting, academic, tight-knit, and friendly—and as I've spent time in this lively, historic city, surrounded by



passionate, welcoming people, I couldn't agree more with these sentiments. And I've been waiting for the moment when I could add my three words: challenging, enriching, and joyful.

As an ASE student this semester, I've been able to see and do so much that has undoubtedly expanded my worldview and changed me for the better, and receiving an Alumni Association Scholarship has enabled me to cover the costs of many of these experiences. The award helped me to purchase a student visa so that I could work as an intern at Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights, also known as the most wonderful independent bookshop in the universe. This immersive experience has given me invaluable insight into the bookselling industry—I've gotten to share my opinions about books with customers and learn about their tastes, assist with the Children's Literature Festival, attend author events, and, most importantly, expand my knowledge of fun British phrases like, "Are you alright there, are you just having a wander?"

Outside of academics, I've attended nearly every ASE trip and even planned my own trips to Edinburgh and the Jurassic Coast, but somehow my craving for travel keeps growing. I've made countless remarkable memories and even better friends. I sincerely believe that this experience—an interruption, a deviation from my original vision—was meant to be, and I can say with certainty now that it has been nothing short of glorious.

Donors for 2021: Thank you for your support.

Leslie Nolen (Sp96, William and Mary)

Mike Ruiz (Sp98, HWS)

Esther Goldschlager (Sp99, Skidmore)

Maddie Anthes (Su09, Denison)

Meara Waxman (Sp18, Elon)

Suzanne Keen (Friend of ASE)

Robert Klouda and family (Friend of ASE)

[Donations to all ASE Scholarships can be made here](#), via PayPal or the British Schools and Universities Foundation (which offers a means of tax-efficient donation). Please let Rob know that you are donating - r.jones@asebath.org - indicating which fund you would like your donation to go to.

On COVID and Clay

Cassie Kircher, *Professor of English at Elon University*, was one of two US faculty able to join ASE to teach in Summer 2021. Here, she compares her latest with previous UK visits.

When I arrived in Bath last summer to teach for ASE, it was the third time I had been to one of the few cities that have been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. The first time I was traveling with a friend and I was a couple years older than my summer 2021 students. Like many of them, I was



then filled with wonder about everything British, especially British literature—Jane Austen, of course, as well as George Eliot, Emily Bronte, and Virginia Woolf—those authors who were staples in American universities. I was also filled with a desire to figure out who I was in relation to such a magnificent enterprise as travel. My students seemed more sophisticated than I remember being, but I could almost hear the same question I asked myself back then swirling unspoken around each of them: How could spending time in another country fit in with my future life?

Often, as I watched the ASE students—I'm thinking of that Dorset afternoon they all looked out over the azure expanse of the English Channel—I seemed to be watching my younger self: sure, but so uncertain, still malleable as clay.

What I wouldn't have guessed back then is that I would one day specialize in creative nonfiction and teach British writers (including those, such as Zadie Smith, who were unborn or still too



young to be writers). I also wouldn't have imagined doing so in Bath (or London or Florence or any of the five US states I've taught in). Nor would I have imagined teaching bright and talented students with their own British literary heroes such as John Keats, the subject of an essay one of my students read at ASE's Write Night. And, of course, the first time I was in Bath (not to mention the year I applied to teach with ASE), it never occurred to me I'd be alive during a pandemic. Back then I thought pandemics were part history and part science fiction.

The second time I was in Bath, I was accompanying my husband, Kevin, and his students from London. My one desire

for that day—visiting the Jane Austen Centre—wasn't much, but how could it be when I was with our two children, ages five and eight? Before leaving Kevin as he paid for his students' entrances into Bath Abbey, I took one of our child's hands in each of my own and figured out which direction was north. I had already consulted a map on the tour bus and memorized the right angles and straight-a-ways we would take. I'm sure no one documented my progress or heard me promise my fellow pilgrims ice cream after we returned. And I'm sure no one noticed my love for a writer of parties and picnics or knew that my 20-year fondness for Austen's Elizabeth Bennett's bright eyes determined the way I viewed strangers—and students. In the end, my kids were less interested in my old author friend than I expected, and I doubt I read one informational plaque posted on any of the dimly lit halls, but if I was disappointed in the Jane Austen Centre, I didn't let on—not even to myself.



Initially what interested me on my third visit to Bath last summer was that the town was, to my eye, unchanged. The same Georgian architecture and golden-colored buildings still stood, the same Royal Crescent built by John Wood (the Younger) still presided above the city, the same stream of tourists still flowed along pedestrian areas and outside the Roman Baths and Pump Room. Even the same—or, at least, similarly appearing—hot air balloons showed off their bright colors against blue evening skies. But of course, some change had occurred. It's true, for example, that you can now "take the waters" at a modern spa completed in 2006 and that its opening ended a 28-year period during which the town's curative thermal waters remained unavailable for bathing.

But that's not the story I'm telling here. Whether I want to acknowledge it or not, each of my three visits to Bath marks a stage of my life, a checkmark along what I've heard psychologists call the human lifespan. Virginia Woolf says the same in a more intriguing way: "If you are young, the future lies upon the present, like a piece of glass, making it tremble and quiver. If you are old, the past lies upon the present, like a thick glass, making it waver, distorting it." It was, of course, me who had changed and me who had lived long enough to see changes in who I was through visits I'd neither carefully planned nor anticipated.

I suspect being in Bath during COVID was not ideal for most ASE students. Many plans had to be changed. Some excursions had to be cancelled. I'm sure a couple dreams had to be postponed. Yet what I remember from the students I knew best were their successes and what I hope for them in the future are more visits to Bath, ones that allow them to remember experiences that weren't on any of their minds when signing up for ASE 2021, such as having several creative nonfiction classes held in the quiet beauty of Henrietta Park due to social distancing in Nelson House or having to visit the Gruffalo in Westonbirt National Arboretum because travel to Monk's House that

July seemed too risky.

Two weeks ago, one of my ASE students emailed with the good news that an essay she wrote last summer was accepted for publication. It's that, I'm pretty sure, not the quarantining and pivoting, she'll most remember.



ASE: The Next Generation.

Emma Steffan (Su21, F&M) became ASE's **first ever ASE second-generation student** when she arrived in Bath this summer. Here, Emma and her mother, **Nadine Steffan (Sp91, F&M)** describe their respective experiences. So much was different; so much was shared.

Nadine -



In January of 1991, just after the start of the Gulf war, I embarked on my study abroad semester in Bath. 30 years later, in the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, my daughter, Emma, left for her five-week summer program in Bath. She had planned to attend in the fall of 2020, but the pandemic had led to that semester being cancelled.

When I was in Bath from January to May of 1991, a lot of people were not traveling because of the War. The plane was eerily empty on the flight over. When I arrived at Gatwick, I was startled to see guards positioned around the airport, dressed all in black and holding machine guns. I met up with a group of fellow students and we traveled by train to Bath. I can't remember exactly who met us at the train station but I do remember an enthusiastic Don Nunes taking us from there to our flats. Don ordered us not to go to sleep, and in order to keep us awake and adjusted to the time change, we were brought out to a tea room for afternoon tea. It was a struggle to keep from falling asleep, but I think we just about managed to stay awake until 9pm as he instructed. We had great freedom during our time in Bath. Being there for several months, we were able to establish many day-to-day routines as residents of the city; for me that included taking a daily jog on the canal path, going to Waitrose for groceries, cooking dinner, taking long walks, shopping, and visiting pubs. Emma's summer program was much shorter, and with pandemic restrictions and required quarantines, her experience in Bath was compressed. She would send me photos of her dinners out with a glass of wine (I don't remember seeing any wine at all when we were in Bath!). Everything Emma experienced looked a bit more sophisticated than it was in 1991. Being in Bath for several months and saving money for travel over spring break, I went out for meals infrequently but did spend money at the pub and on late nights at the club in Bog



Island (thankfully there were no cell phones then and hopefully no photographic evidence), or buying Dairy Milk bars from the newsstand on the corner.

In 1991, we had no laptops or email, and we were not able to make outgoing phone calls from our flats. I would talk with my family maybe once a week, and I wrote letters to friends and family at home on that fabulously thin airmail paper. In contrast, Emma had to tolerate daily text messages and the occasional FaceTime from me. I asked her to take specific photos: one of her and her housemates in front of their house, a picture of the view out her window, and a re-creation of my photo in front of Stonehenge (I thought this one would really be fun to have!) One of the first FaceTime calls was on a Monday night, which turned out to be bell-ringing practice night (every Monday from 7:30 to 9 according to their website) at the Abbey. The entire time we talked I could hear the bells ringing in various configurations in the background.

Emma and I gravitated toward very different types of classes. As an English major, I took Shakespeare with Paul Lapworth, Thomas Hardy with Les Arnold, John Donne and the Metaphysical Poets with a very disheveled Richard Major, and Barbara's almost theatrically taught class "Sin, Sex, and Morality". We traveled quite a bit as a group and there was travel tied to specific classes as well. It was quite the semester. All of my papers and assignments were written in cursive, single spaced, on lined paper. I am sure today's students would cringe at that thought!

Bath is the kind of place that sinks in and stays with you. The first dog my husband and I adopted, an enormous black lab, we named Abbey (after Bath Abbey) and if I had to say where the name Emma came from, I'd say 'Jane Austen, of course!'

I am so glad that Emma had a chance to spend time in Bath and experience the ASE program, and I hope we get a chance to travel back as a family.



Emma -

As I was growing up people would often say that I reminded them of my mom, down to familial resemblance to our voices on the phone, so it is not a shocker that I both attend the same US college she did and chose to study abroad on the same program. After close to 2 years of preparation, and almost exactly 30 years after my mom, I was finally able to study abroad in Bath during this past summer. The covid-19 pandemic meant that much of the travel I had dreamed of doing was not realistic, however, it allowed me to fully explore Bath as well as meet students I would not have met had I gone during the Fall of 2020.



Similar to my mom, my experience in Bath was unique. With the Covid-19 protocols there was a mandatory quarantine that the British government required all coming into the country to comply with. My housemate, also named Emma, and I arrived a day early because of flight issues (another product of the pandemic) and settled into Linley house. Once out of this initial quarantine, my housemates and I were able to explore the city. However, evidence of the pandemic was all around us, and we had to take covid tests twice a week.



One of my favorite days was when we were able to go to Stonehenge and Salisbury. It was our first trip and so for us on the program the first real experience outside of Bath. My mom speaks of harassing me with texts and FaceTimes, but I had a lot of fun recreating her photo in front of Stonehenge! Additionally, seeing one of the original copies of the Magna Carta as a Government major and History minor was incredible.

While in Bath I was able to take two classes with tutors from the University of Bristol. The first, called “Bath, Britain, and the Black Atlantic” focused on the complicated history of the United Kingdom and Bath specifically with the transatlantic slave trade. Our class visited Bristol, a colonial hub for the trade, and the M-Shed, which had a specific exhibit on the trade as well as on the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. Having learned about the American side of this story, I enjoyed learning from a new perspective about the slave trade and how continued inequalities in society stem from this history. Second, I took “King Arthur: Life and Legend”, which focused on the origins of the legend of King Arthur all the way up to more modern adaptations of the story. One of my favorite parts of this course was going to Glastonbury Abbey and seeing the ruins of the cathedral that was once there. We ate lunch and took our class in the ruins which was incredible. Afterwards we hiked Glastonbury Tor and we were able to see the whole area from above.

Even though the experience was different than I imagined because of the pandemic, I am glad that I was able to study abroad in Bath, experience the city and share in my mother’s love for this special place.



Book Feature

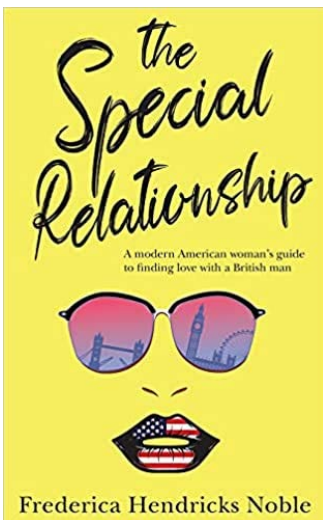
The Special Relationship: A Modern American Woman's Guide to Finding Love with a British Man

Frederica Hendricks Noble recently joined the ASE faculty to teach new seminars in *Cross-Cultural Psychology and Women and Psychology*. Here, we learn about her and about her book, *The Special Relationship*



I grew up in Detroit and Pontiac, Michigan and received my undergraduate degree in Psychology from Vassar College. Prior to obtaining a PhD in Counselling Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia, I worked as an Admissions Officer at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

Arriving in England in 2002, I first worked at the University of the West of England and then taught Psychology at Bath Spa University. I now have dual citizenship and split my time between Somerset and Tennessee. I am currently the Principal Consultant and Lifestyle Management Coach at Noble & Noble Consulting, the coach-based consulting firm I co-founded with my husband. We coach private clients through personal and professional transitions. I am delighted to be joining the faculty at Advanced Studies in England!



In *The Special Relationship*, a smart, career-focused American woman from Los Angeles finds her British Prince Charming, moves to the UK after a whirlwind romance and is overwhelmed with how tricky it is to navigate the culture clash. Sound familiar?

At the outset, it seemed simple: have a few dates, have a bit of fun. But as friendship gave way to romance, and romance gave way to marriage and moving from LA to a rural English village. Neither of us quite saw the culture clash which was coming...

However, it's now been 20 years since I met my Bristol-born husband (who calls me 'the original Megan Markle') and moved to the UK to live and work. I feel uniquely well-placed to offer advice for American women coming to England with a man in mind!

Part cultural commentary, part relationship coaching and part travel guide, my book details the humorous culture clash which happens when a Black American woman falls in love with a White British man. It explores how to navigate English culture and provides readers with insider tips and advice on how to have a successful, modern day Anglo-American relationship.

The book also looks at the historical 'million-dollar heiresses' who came on the transatlantic marriage trade at the end of the 19th century and compares their experiences with modern day Anglo-American relationships.

The Special Relationship is available to buy online from retailers including: Barnes & Noble, Blackwell's (UK), and Amazon. If you'd like to connect with Frederica, please do so [here](#).

Creating an ASE Drama

Siouxie Easter, principal US ally in the development of ASE's Theatre offerings, Theatre Summer School faculty 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2021, and - until recently - Professor of Theatre at Wells College, reflects on her relationship with the Programme.



It is only fitting that I first met Jonathan Hope and Barbara White at the theatre. I was with a group of students from Wells College seeing a production of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* at the Barbican Theatre in January of 2005. My colleague at Wells College (now emeritus) Alan Clugston noticed Jonathan and Barbara in the theatre pub and introduced me. At that point in time, I was in my second year of teaching theatre at Wells and I had heard about Advanced Studies in England, but didn't know much about the programme yet. The three of us quickly hit it off - and thus began my now 16-year (and counting!) relationship with ASE.

Fortune, and a colleague who suddenly became phobic of flying, led me to attend my first academic board meeting in Bath as a representative of Wells College. Memorable moments include my first breathtaking views of the Abbey, a lovely ride through the Cotswolds, an outstanding dinner at Oxford, and learning more about this amazing Programme.



Over the next few years, I was proud to represent ASE at Wells College and Wells College at ASE at meetings and recruitment events. I watched as several students from Wells engaged with the various programmes and found a home with ASE.

Jonathan and I discussed the theatre offerings many times over the years, and we began dreaming of new courses and ideas. In 2012, he approached me about designing a Theatre Summer School to coexist with the current summer offerings. I jumped at the opportunity. In the spring of 2013, I was on sabbatical from Wells so I traveled to Bath to begin development of the programme. Jonathan and I studied other summer programmes in theatre, visited every theatre and potential theatre space



in the city, and talked about curriculum. We met with the Arts faculty at Bath Spa University and discussed ways that Bath Spa students could be involved. By the end of my stay, we knew we had something great that other schools did not offer.

The first ASE Theatre Summer School launched in June of 2014. Ian McGlynn, Director of The Rondo Theatre, was my co-teacher for 'Acting: British Style' and the playwright Jim Brown and I shared duties for the 'Not Just Shakespeare' Theatre History course. Our group of fearless students jumped right in with us as we took them through centuries of British theatre, traditions, and performances. We saw productions at Stratford-Upon-Avon, the Globe, the National Theatre, the Bristol Old Vic, the Mission Theatre, the Rondo Theatre, and the Theatre Royal. We went



to Oxford, explored the city of Bath, and rehearsed in the parks. We had a master class with actor Sharon Smalls of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and had talks with actors after plays at the Globe Theatre. The summer ended with a public performance at the Chapel Arts Centre of scenes from contemporary British plays and Restoration Comedy, as well as a devised piece the students created as a love letter to Bath, the city that quickly became their home.

ASE Theatre Summer School was an instant hit. I would go back to teach the TSS three more times in 2015, 2016, and 2021. Other brilliant US professors and British tutors taught the programme when I wasn't there.



Many wonderful students have now been through the Theatre Summer School. Of these, three students decided to come back to get their graduate degrees in Theatre from Bath Spa University. Many of our former students work as professional actors in places such as Bath, New York, and Chicago. Two of our former students operate their own theatre companies. Several others are working in the theatre industry as stage managers, box office managers, choreographers, and development directors. We have models, teachers, finance directors, and admission counselors. I am so proud of all of these

students and how they found their voice with the help of their time at ASE.

This past summer, 2021, I was fortunate enough to be back teaching in the TSS alongside UK faculty Mandy Horlock and (again) Jim Brown. Although things were definitely different due to Covid (online Restoration Comedy, anyone?), we quickly formed an ensemble. The students tackled what I believe to be the hardest material yet, and wowed their peers with performances of scenes from Aphra Behn's *The Lucky Chance* and Lucy Kirkwood's *The Welkin*. As has been the tradition since the first TSS, the students also created a devised theatre piece. This year's piece was inspired by their time in quarantine and imagined stories about what was waiting for them when they were finally released to explore a new country. The piece was humorous and poignant, and asked the question we must all have pondered these last two years, "Is it better to be in here or out there?"

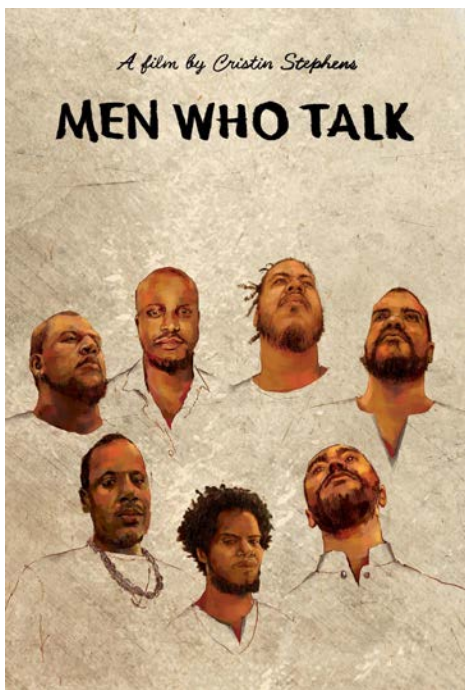


I can answer that question with a simple statement, "It is better to be in Bath." I cherish my times there and the wonderful ASE Team that has made me a part of their family (probably as the crazy aunt).

Here's to making many more memories!

Film Feature: Men Who Talk

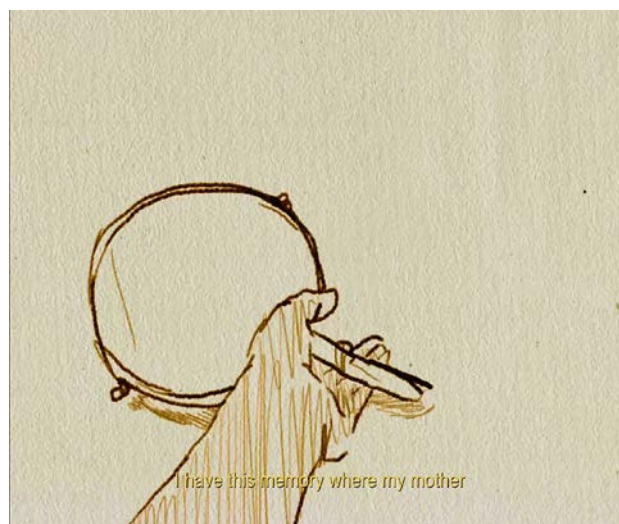
Cristin Stephens (Su08, UofR) is a proud ASE alum in her final year of film school at UT Austin's MFA program in film production at the Moody College of Communication. Her pre-thesis film, *Men Who Talk*, most recently screened at the New Orleans Film Festival, one of the few Oscar-qualifying film festivals in three Academy-accredited categories. It is now featured in the curriculum of the Global Media Cultures class at UT Dallas.



Men Who Talk is an intimate portrait of Black men in Brasília, Brazil who strive to find their place in a hostile society. They meet regularly in the circle, a salve as a space to share, reflect, grieve and uplift one another. The film ruminates on themes of Blackness and masculinity while it explores memory through animation. It illuminates the experiences and traumas of Black men in Brazil through storytelling.

The film was awarded a production grant from the Austin Film Society and the Longhorn Creators Foundation Excellence in producing prize. It will make its Brazilian premiere in 2022.

<https://www.cristinstephens.com/men-who-talk>



Folks we saw in 2021

It's been an odd year, to say the least, but in spite of the difficulties of travel, Nelson House still saw a handful of esteemed visitors, and Jonathan's trip to the States in September (our one recruitment trip of the year!) saw lots of you come out to support ASE's efforts on campus - and/or to join him for a COVID-safe gathering..

Remember: you are always welcome to drop by Nelson House (but please drop us an email ahead of time so that we can arrange a warm reception - and get the special biscuits in!)

NELSON HOUSE VISITORS



Rachel Dacey (Sp17, Mary Wash')

Rebecca Walters (Au14, UofR)

Rachel Cleere (Au16, Wells)

Danielle DeVillier (Sp20, Georgetown)

Alex Hesterberg (Sp20, Denison)

Lily McGrail (Au19/Su20, Georgetown)

ALUMS AND FRIENDS WHO MET WITH US OR HELPED ON CAMPUS IN THE US

Sue Willard (Sp98, HWS)

Kristy Kossman-Wren (Sp98, Wells)

Tereza Lopez (Sp20, Clark)

Liz Sugg (Sp21, Wellesley)

Emma Anghel (Sp21, Wellesley)

Taylor Hirn (Sp21, Wellesley)

Molly McCaul (Sp21, Wellesley)

Daisy Hollifield (Sp21, Wellesley)

Willa McGough (Sp21, Wellesley)

Suzanna Schofield (Sp21, Wellesley)

Jess Stoker (Sp21, Wellesley)

Steph Mullervy (Sp99, BC)

Alyssa Tomkowicz (Sp14, Williams)

Nicole Davis (Au98, HWS)

Anna Kozler (Su19, Oberlin)

Mimi Silverstein (Su19, Oberlin)

Allison Schmitt (Su19, Oberlin)

Kevin Baldwin (Au99, UofR)

Maria Chanez-Campanaro (Su17, UofR)

Luke Cornwell (Su15, Wells)

Alex Kerai (Au17, HWS)

Heidi Kozireski (Friend of ASE)

Alex Riad (Au10, Wells)

Mike Ruiz (Sp98, HWS)

Ali Beck (Sp08, Wells)

Marina Loew (Sp07, Wells)

The parents of Nick Orstien (Sp11, G'burg)

Maddie Elliott (Sp17, Skidmore)



SPRING '91 VIRTUAL REUNION

Cynthia Pepper (Wells)

Miho Kubota (Wesleyan)

Helene Schneider (Skidmore)

Jennifer Redman (BC)

Emily Moody (BC)

Sandor Domonkos (William and Mary)

Mark Redman (HWS)

Richard Morris (HWS)

Nadine Steffan (F&M)

Kimberly Sheris (Skidmore)

Eric Schnure (HWS)

David Stockwell (Skidmore)

Michelle Parker (HWS)

Megan Thomas (G'burg)

Steven Gongola (Bucknell)

Christian Powers (William and Mary)

Larry Klein (F&M)

Will Schroeder (F&M)

As always, Rob is pretty sure that he has caught everyone but, if you are missing from the list he's really sorry!

Alumni News Updates 2021

Doug Jones (Sp02, HWS) and his wife have spent the past eight years as faculty at Binghamton University, part of the State University of New York. Doug is the director of the Religious Studies Program, and teaches both introductory courses on religion as well as courses in 16th- and 17th-century Christianity (an interest he encountered while taking courses in Bath back in 2002!). They have two boys (*pictured right*), and love exploring the beautiful country outside the small city where they live.



Joanna Chlebus (Sp04, Mount Holyoke) is proud to announce her promotion to Senior Editor after 2 years at healthcare advertising agency Area 23. Her obsession with British literature has only increased since her online ASE Continuing Education courses in 2020 and 2021, and Eleanor Hahn, whom she befriended during Mike Witcombe's Agatha Christie class, Barbara Oliver (Joanna's aunt, and now a firm member of the ASE family), and a few other friends and family members have created a book club devoted to Agatha Christie as a result.



Stacey Knepp (Spring '06) and Tucker Stapleton (*pictured left*) were married on October 22 in Falls Church, VA with an intimate gathering of family and friends.

Sheila Ruffin (Su06, Hampton) (*pictured right*) was selected as Boating Industry Magazine's 40 Under 40 for 2021. Sheila is the owner/founder of [Soca Caribbean Yacht Charters](#), a yacht vacation travel agency that coordinates personalized, stress-free, all-inclusive yacht vacations to the Caribbean.



Mary Sasso (Sp07, BC) (*pictured left*) and her husband David welcomed Henry John Lukmire into their lives on June 25, 2021.



We were deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of **Bridget McElroy (Sp07, Gettysburg)**. Our thoughts are with her friends and loved ones.

Joe Anthes (Su09, Gettysburg) successfully defended his dissertation and earned his EdD in Educational Leadership from Lehigh University, whilst **Maddie Anthes (Su09, Denison)** published a chapbook of flash fiction called ["Beautiful, Violent Things"](#) with Word West Press.

Sarah Short (Sp10, CNU) married Joe Hutyra in Estes Park, CO, on August 8, 2021. Sarah lives in Denver with Joe and works remotely for Temple University Education Abroad & Overseas Campuses as their Institutional Relations Manager.

Abbey Heller (Su10, F&M) graduated with a Ph.D. in Political Science from Emory University, and is now working as a data scientist in Washington, D.C. She particularly wanted to share because if she hadn't taken British Politics during her time at ASE she never would have gone on to do the Ph.D.

Emily Hessney Lynch (Sp11, UofR) had five short stories published in 2021, and two more are forthcoming. You can find her work at <https://www.ehlwrites.com/my-work>.

Lola Mendeloff (Sp13, Denison) married her boyfriend of 11 years, Corey, in July (after a year's delay), in Milwaukee, WI (*pictured right*).

Livia Meneghin (Au13, F&M) earned her MFA in Poetry from Emerson College in May 2021, where she now works as Affiliated Faculty in the Writing Studies Program, and as Program Coordinator for EmersonWRITES--a free creative writing lab for Boston Public School students.



Margaret Dalton (Sp14, UofR) and **Samantha (Strain) Valentine (Sp14, Nazareth College)** (*pictured left*) married on October 21, 2021 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Emma Murphy and Bobby Novak (Sp14, G'burg) (*pictured right*) were also finally able to tie the knot in October. Amongst the guests were fellow Spring '14 alums **Emily Cranfill, Rachel Hammer** and **Rachel Podber**.



Jesse Siegel (Au14, Gettysburg) defended his dissertation proposal on German-Czechoslovak businessmen in interwar Europe. Now, as a PhD Candidate in Modern European History at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, he plans to begin his dissertation research at Charles University of Prague on a Fulbright-Hayes Fellowship in January 2022.

Bev Kippenhan (Su15, Mary Wash') finished her Masters in Classical Acting at Bath Spa in September 2020, moved back to the USA in November 2020, and in April 2021 moved to Sarasota, Florida to accept a position as Assistant Box Office Manager at Florida Studio Theatre. She has just finished understudying a role in one of the theatre's plays, and has auditioned recently to understudy two more roles for the upcoming season.



Emma Richardson (Sp16, HWS) and **Jon Blader (Sp16, F&M)** (*pictured left*) were married on September 25 in Chicago, IL. In their wedding party was another ASE alum, **Clare McCormick (Su14, HWS)**. The bride and groom received a special wedding gift of blue champagne flutes from the Bath Aqua Glass Shop for our "something blue". Emma and Jon were delighted to have a piece of Bath with them on their wedding day. "Thank you, ASE, for making another successful love connection!"

Kyle Stolove (Au16, UofR) is engaged and planning to get married in the spring of 2022 to Jojo Coelho.

Amber Wardzala (Au19, Denison) received 2nd place in *Ruminant Magazine's* 2021 William Van Dyke Short Story Competition, judged by Indigenous writer Kelli Ji Ford. Her winning story, "A Guide to Removal," was published in Issue [60 of Ruminant Magazine](#).