Conference 2006—This year’s speaker

David Hopkins was recently appointed to the inaugural HSBC Chair in International Leadership, where he supports the work of iNet, the International arm of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Leadership Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London. Between 2002 and 2005 he served three Secretary of States as the Chief Adviser on School Standards at the Department for Education and Skills. Previously, he was Chair of the Leicester City Partnership Board and Professor of Education, Head of the School, and Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Nottingham. Before that again he was a Tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education, a secondary school teacher and Outward Bound Instructor. David is also an International Mountain Guide who still climbs regularly in the Alps and Himalayas.

Ten Years On

Ten years ago, LAHC was an idea and a draft constitution drawn up by John Barker, Paul Wiseman and David Bamford during three days of intensive brainstorming in an extremely sultry Rio de Janeiro. At this ten-year mark, it is approriate to look back and recall some of the milestones passed and the people who have helped us to pass them. John Barker’s precipitate return to UK very soon after the election of the first Executive Committee left LAHC without a Chairman. However, the foundations laid by John were already solid, and his replacement by the forceful, visionary personality of Paul Wiseman provided the impetus necessary to drive us forward in those early years.

During the first three years, the School Review was devised, developed, applied and consolidated. Its value needs no advocate. The Head’s Appraisal has joined it as an effective tool of evaluation. Training for the Review is now very much an LAHC-developed instrument both of preparation for Review service and professional development in its own right. Other training opportunities have been developed upon request and are offered as part of a range of services.

The annual Student Conference is now an eagerly awaited event in the calendar, and it has provided many students in their last two years of Secondary education with valuable opportunities for growth. Also, a number of schools have embarked upon activities of sharing and exchange as individual initiatives.

Sadly, four former LAHC members whose personalities are deeply etched in the memories of all who knew them are no longer with us: Casey McCann, who hosted the first Annual Conference in 1997, Elisabeth Fox, by whose invitation was held the meeting in November 1995 which led to the establishment of LAHC, Bill Baker, whose strong sense of commitment and belief were key elements in the setting up of the School Review, and Nick Martin, whose ebullience brought a note of levity to the most solemn of occasions. These four have gone the way we all go eventually. We are grateful for having known them, and we honour their memory.

A number of members, past and current, have been the recipients of awards of recognition in successive New Year and Birthday Honours lists: Jimmy Cappanera, Martin Garvie, Paul Wiseman, Bertie Noble, Rina Bayly. Not only are these recognitions indicative of the contribution to the field of education made by their recipients, they are also cause for rejoicing among the LAHC membership. It is fitting that a body rejoices in and for the successes achieved by individual members.

No organisation grows merely by taking pride in achievements and resting on laurels. The next ten years will present their own challenges. One of the first priorities, if LAHC is to continue to grow and achieve its true status as a body of educational weight in Latin America is for all concerned to work together to ensure that all members of their school communities are aware of both our identity and the services which are on offer. A significant number of members of staff in schools where this has been done have reason to be grateful for such services as confidential consultancy, assistance with redrafting of cvs and letters of application, and information on posts available in other schools. It is in the areas of service to schools and to those who work or study in them that the true value of LAHC membership is to be perceived.
Initiatives in Technology: Educational and Administrative Software in The British Schools, Montevideo

Unparalleled expansion in the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) has enhanced and enriched all aspects of schooling - teaching, learning, management and administration. This fact doesn't simply reflect the growing use of technologies in our everyday lives but it also emphasizes the huge potential ICT has and will have to transform the educational process at all levels.

In March 2003, within the framework of the existing development plan for ICT related improvements, The British Schools began work on a collaborative project to implement its first integrated software programme that would link academic, management and administrative information school wide. This has allowed the School to work with an educational portal, which permits easy access to all class lists for attendance, grading, and lesson planning amongst many other documents. This portal will also allow students, parents and teachers to see assigned homework, access subject information placed by the teacher, keep track of their own performance and grading, etc. It has made the exchange of information between the teachers and students and other members of the School community more effective and efficient. As a result of this project the School has been named, by the European Union, as one of the centres of innovation in South America.

ICT is an extremely important tool for educating students to acquire the visual and digital literacy necessary for enhanced learning in a constantly evolving information society. Students that have access to good ICT resources maximize their individual potential through active forms of differentiated learning. ICT tools allow students to manipulate representations of physical phenomena and to interact with abstract concepts as if they were real; they also give students the space in which to interact with concepts by giving them personalized feedback to their own questions. The School is confident that with important support and guidance given by teachers, the appropriate use of these resources can significantly help students attain better, life-long, learning results.

Student Exchange – a new experience

In August, six students from Hiram Bingham in Lima, accompanied by a teacher, travelled to Argentina to live for ten days with their hosts from St George’s College, North. This visit, so far as we know, breaks new ground in relations between the LAHC schools. It was not a sporting encounter nor an artistic presentation.

Instead, the idea was for the Peruvian visitors to experience life as students in Argentina. They went to classes in St George’s, made a presentation about Peru and lived in the homes of their hosts. Time was also found to visit the major cultural and tourist attractions of Buenos Aires and also make a short trip to Iguazú.

Both Peruvians and Argentines benefited greatly from this visit. It was a chance to experience each others’ cultures, widen horizons and have fun! Hiram Bingham is looking forward to next year when they will be receiving their Argentine counterparts.

The July Newsletter

It is intended that the July edition of the newsletter should give space to further exciting and innovative initiatives taking place in LAHC’s schools. Members are invited to submit copy to the editor (david.bamford@lahc.net) before the end of June at the latest. Suggested length: 300 words plus photograph.
The School Review breaks new ground

The two School Reviews carried out in 2005 introduced new dimensions to the instrument.

The first one, carried out in May in the British School of Rio de Janeiro, was applied to the two Lower Primary sections of the School, and the chief difference between this application and the thirteen previous ones was in the fact that it was applied concurrently to these two parallel and geographically distant sections of the same school.

It has always been maintained that one of the principal virtues of the Review is its versatility. It is not necessary, or even perhaps desirable, to apply the Review to a whole school. It could be applied, albeit in a reduced way, to a unit as small as a department. When Paul Wiseman asked, at the end of 2004, if it would be possible to carry out a comparative and parallel operation in the two sections mentioned, my reply was that this would be a good test of the validity of the assertion.

Since this Review was going to be different, it was decided that we would, if not break the mould, at least give it a good denting, and do the Review from Wednesday to Wednesday, instead of Saturday to Saturday. It has often been asked why this is not the way we do the Review normally, and the reply has been that it is not a good idea to split the operation in two, because it’s important to maintain momentum, also because it would mean more time away from school for the members of the Review team.

It worked. Although the team did not have the valuable time during the first weekend to do the normal preparation, they did have a useful day in the middle to catch up, take stock, discuss points of focus, etc. and another day, the Sunday, to see a little of Rio. They went up the Corcovado, but as it was shrouded in cloud, they were hard put to see even the statue, let alone the view. All was not lost, however; they went up again on the Thursday afternoon after finishing the report. Spectacular!

There is a great deal to be said for a small Review with a tight focus. There were six on this team, the smallest yet, all but one of them experienced Reviewers, and, because of this fact and the narrowness of the focus, there was not the degree of pressure that is often the case. The work was fun and the fun was even more fun! Heads who feel that their schools are not ready for a full-scale Review could do worse than consider a similar type of operation. The Review instrument is, after all, at the service of their schools.

The other Review, of Redland School, Santiago, in October, introduced a new leader to the hot seat. Alan Downie gallantly took on this role, since, according to the rules, the Executive Officer was precluded from taking part in the Review on account of his previous association with the school. Nevertheless, the presence of the said official as overseer was accepted by both the Head of the school and the Team Leader.

This was a formula that worked. I hope that Alan did not feel that I was breathing down his neck, looking over his shoulder or otherwise causing him discomfort by virtue of my physical proximity. The exercise brought new blood and fresh vision to the leadership and allowed me to take a more relaxed look at the whole process than is usually possible and see places where nuts and bolts need tightening and also new opportunities for training and development.

Another Review-related exercise took place during the course of the year. During a visit to Rio prior to and during the Student Conference, I was invited, as a form of follow-up to the Review of the Secondary section the previous year, to carry out lesson observation in certain subjects. These observations were subject to the consent of the teachers concerned, were confidential, with individual feedback, but resulting also in a mini-report on Classroom Practice delivered to the Head of the Section at the end of the process.

This was a significant departure, in that it took one aspect of the Review, applied it in individual cases, it is hoped, to the benefit of the teachers concerned, and led to a report on what is normally but one aspect of a Review, aimed at helping a school fine tune one aspect of its practice. This was further demonstration of the versatility and uniqueness of the LAHC School Review.

David Bamford

New members

Norma Bustamante is Headmistress of the Colegio San Jorge de Lima and also a former pupil of the school. Prior to her appointment as Headmistress, Norma held the posts of MYP Coordinator and IB Diploma Co-ordinator in San Jorge.

Norma holds the degrees of BA in Education and MA in Linguistics for English Language Teaching, and her career of over 40 years in education has taken her from her native Peru to Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, USA, France, The United Kingdom, and Turkey. Norma has also been Head of the Languages Department of the prestigious Instituto Pedagógico Nacional – Monterrico, in Lima is an active member of APPI (Asociación Peruana de Profesores de Inglés) and IATEFL.

Gabriel Rshaid, Headmaster of St Andrew’s Scots School, Buenos Aires. has worked for 17 years as a teacher and Head in various bilingual schools in Buenos Aires. Parallel to his career as an educator, he has worked extensively in the development of educational technology projects, mostly related to Space Education with a special focus on the design and implementation of online spaceflight simulations. He is married, has two sons and a keen interest in sports and chess.

LAHC extends a very warm welcome to these new members and looks forward to the enrichment that their experience and expertise will no doubt bring to the association.
OBITUARY—NICK MARTIN

Nick Martin former member, latterly Associate member of LAHC, died in Lisbon on the morning of Saturday 3rd December 2005.

Nick was Headmaster of Valeverde School, in Portugal, a post which he had taken up three months previously. As Headmaster of St Paul’s College, Hurlingham, Buenos Aires, Nick was a founder member of LAHC. In his next post, as Headmaster of the English School, Bogotá, he continued both to champion the values for which LAHC stood and to make full use of the opportunities which membership offers both to the individual member and the school.

He requested a Review of St Paul’s College in 2001, demonstrating that the Review was within the budget even of a small school in financially difficult times. One of his first actions as Head of the English School in Bogotá was to request the LAHC Head’s Appraisal. He did this both by setting an example to his staff and showing that appraisal was not a threatening process, and as part of a reason for taking the Executive Officer to Bogotá and using him to provide a range of services within his own school and to other schools in the city, as a way of attracting interest in membership.

The following are tributes received from some of those who knew Nick.

“Shortly before leaving The English School, Nick invited me up to speak at the graduation of his senior students. I stayed with him then, and had a better chance than usual to discover all there was to Nick, apart from his usual rambunctious Conference form. A bit of a loner, great cook, and very unassuming and generous friend.

I always thought he’d be back in the fold one day, even if he was hardly one to look out for his health. What a sad loss!”

John Mackenzie

Nick would not have wanted to "go out with a whimper but a bang" so much larger than life he was. I suppose a fitting epitaph is that everyone who met him will be sure to have a vivid picture in his/her mind. I most certainly do!”

Rina Bayly

“What a loss for LAHC and all of us, his colleagues and friends. He gave us all so much, not only of his presence, wisdom and friendship. We will certainly miss him.”

Odette Boys

“I didn’t know Nick very well but I do remember him floating about in the pool at Cajamarca with a large glass of wine, colourful bathing trunks and natty head gear. He sent me some witty e-mails from Bogotá, not least in connection with the Region B Conference in Caracas, to which he gave strong support. Undoubtedly he was of the old school, erudite, charming and colourful.”

Richard Free

“The first time I met Nick Martin was as an impressionable and inexperienced Head who had never been south of the equator, at the famous conference for Latin American Heads in Buenos Aires in 1995 from which LAHC was born. There were two people there who, despite having only passing contact with me, left a lasting impression: Nick and Casey McCann. They were both good-humoured, generous, enthusiastic and optimistic and represented the spirit which was the driving force behind the creation of LAHC. Without doubt it was people like them that influenced me to join LAHC.”

Alan Downie

“Nick was certainly a memorable character and full of life. It seems early for him to have gone. I am sure he will be missed by many people, but certainly not forgotten.”

Richard Collingwood-Selby

“Personally, as his referee and also as his friend, I believe that the world’s educational community has lost a great leader. Those that had the pleasure of enjoying his friendship really know what kind of person he was.”

Daniel Hernández (President of the Board, the English School)