

From sports stars to spies

– the leading lights of a Derbyshire school

Lady Manners School in Bakewell has produced more than its fair share of high achievers and famous faces. Head girl *Josephine Walbank* takes a look at some of the school's most celebrated ex-pupils.

THE SCHOOL'S motto 'Pour Y Parvenir' (Strive to attain) has been driving pupils to achieve their own individual successes for nearly 500 years.

Lady Manners, in Bakewell, is a school with a rich history as well as an exciting future. Consistently, for many years, the school has produced a wide range of talented individuals, from Olympians to playwrights and MPs to secret agents.

The school was founded on May 20, 1636, by Grace, Lady Manners – the Manners family then and today are the

owners of Haddon Hall – as a charity school to provide free education for poor boys in Bakewell and Rowsley. Initially the school only hired one teacher, who had to work 11 hours a day, six days a week. He was also forbidden to get married or have any children and, despite all this, only received a £15 a year salary.

Since the school was founded, it has moved sites, changed to admit girls as well as boys and has become a comprehensive rather than a grammar school. However,

“Lady Manners, in Bakewell, is a school with a rich history as well as an exciting future.”

despite these changes, the school is still strongly connected to its roots and humble beginning, holding a yearly service in Bakewell Church to commemorate its founder Grace, Lady Manners.

Throughout its long history, Lady Manners has educated thousands of students, and even a few famous faces.

Barry Askew, former editor of the *News of the World*, the *Matlock Mercury*, the *Lancashire Evening Post* and the *Sheffield Star*, is one former pupil. One of his most notable achievements was

his campaign to expose Whittingham Hospital for the maltreatment of its patients. His work helped to turn the institution on its head and ultimately brought about national reform within the mental health sector. Askew's dedicated

work gained him the 1971 National Press Awards Campaigning Journalist Award.

Later in his career, Askew won a second award after he exposed the corruption of the chief constable in Lancashire. Some 37 charges were found against the officer,



Above: Campaigning journalist Barry Askew.

Below: Smiling through the pain – that's Annie Last.

including misuse of police manpower, showing favour to individuals, falsifying documents and intervening to reduce criminal charges. Askew published the charges in full in February 1977, which resulted in the chief constable's dismissal in December of the same year.

However, his later career with the *News of the World* was cut short after he suggested to the Queen that if the Princess of Wales felt harassed by



press photographers she should send a servant out to shop for her. The Queen reportedly gave him a “withering look”, and told him: “I think that’s one of the most pompous things I have ever heard.”

In 2006 Askew entered the Press Gazette Regional Press Hall of Fame, celebrating the 40 greatest regional press journalists of the modern era. He died on April 16, 2012.

Another former Lady Manners pupil is **Helen Catherine Goodman**, a British Labour Party politician, who has been the Member of Parliament representing Bishop Auckland since 2005. Her work includes becoming the Head of Strategy at The Children’s Society in 1998, where she was involved in implementing policies to cut child poverty. In 2007-8 she became deputy leader of the House of Commons, and she was later appointed Shadow Minister for Media in 2011, where she campaigned for better child protection online. She is a renowned campaigner, and in February 2013 after her disgust at the impact of the ‘bedroom tax’, she tried to live for a week on £18.

Alex Hammond is a former Lady Manners pupil who went on to become a television presenter, reporter and horse racing expert for Sky Sports News and At the Races. She has also worked as a racing presenter on Talksport radio and written columns for the Daily Mail.

A more recent former pupil is **Annie Last**, a professional cyclist who specialises in mountain biking and cyclo-cross. In 2009 she joined the British Cycling Olympic Academy programme and at the World Cup event of 2012 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, she placed ninth, although at one point she was leading the race. Her qualification for the 2012 Olympics came



Above: Playwright Laura Wade, another former Lady Manners’ pupil.

Below left: Alex Hammond has worked for Sky Sports News, Talksport and the Daily Mail

down to the World Cup event in La Bresse in May 2012, and thanks to Last finishing eighth at the event, Great Britain gained a position in the Olympics in the women’s cross country mountain bike event.

By achieving this, she became the first British woman to qualify for the Olympic mountain bike competition since 2000.

Becky Measures is a radio presenter on Peak FM, educated at Lady Manners, who is also renowned for her dedicated charity work. In 2004, when she was just 23, she decided to have a double mastectomy after a genetic test revealed that she had an 80 to 90 per cent risk

of developing breast cancer, an illness which both her mother and cousin had suffered from. In 2006, ITV broadcast the documentary *My Breasts or My Life* about Measures and her decision to have her breasts removed. The programme, which was filmed over two years, followed the decision and preparation for the operation as well as her, and her family’s, feelings afterwards. Measures’ charity campaign includes raising funds to build Europe’s first breast cancer prevention centre through her organisation of a tasteful charity nude calendar, featuring different local people including members of Chesterfield FC.

After leaving Lady Manners, **Sir Maurice Oldfield** GCMG CBE became a British intelligence officer and espionage administrator, who became the seventh director general of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) from 1973 to 1978. Prior to this, in 1946, he was awarded an MBE for his work for the secret service.

The school specialises in music, so it is hardly surprising that Lady Manners has produced some famous musicians. One such illustrious name is professional bassoonist **Julie Price**. Price initially became principal bassoonist with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and after performing with several other orchestras, she is now co-principal bassoonist with





the BBC Symphony Orchestra while also principal bassoonist at the ECO.

Phillip Whitehead is a former Labour MEP for the East Midlands, chairman of the European Parliamentary Labour Party, television producer and Labour MP for Derby North 1970-83, who has represented his party in both the House of Commons and in Europe. After leaving Lady Manners Whitehead became an independent documentary producer in the early 1960s, and later, his notable productions included *The World at War*, for which he won an Emmy in 1974; *Nixon*; *The Nehru/Gandhi Dynasty*; and *The Kennedys*, for which he won another Emmy in 1993. In his political career, he helped to introduce



legislation on police complaints and family planning as well as adoption. In his last two years he worked as a front-bench spokesman on education and the arts.

In the world of writing and acting, Lady Manners has educated some renowned individuals. **Alison Uttley** is the writer of novels including *The Country Child* and *A Traveller in Time*, and the children's books the Sam Pig series, *Little Grey Rabbit*, *The Adventures of No Ordinary Rabbit* and *Cuckoo Cherry-Tree*.

Actor, writer, composer and musician **Richard Lumsden** has television work including Colin in three series of *Is it Legal?*

and Henry in *Wonderful you*, both for ITV; *Foggy* in two series of *First of the Summer Wine* and Roger in *The House That Jack Built* for the BBC. He appeared in the films *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Avengers*, *Room To Rent*, *Silent Cry*, *Gospel of John*, *Attila The Hun* and *Life of Riley*. Playwright **Laura Wade**, who wrote *Breathing Corpses* in 2005, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre and 2010's *Posh*, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, is another former Lady Manners pupil.

More recently **Maddie Thompson**, at just 13 years old and while she was still studying at Lady Manners, became the youngest wheelchair basketball player to represent Great Britain when she competed in the U22 European Championships in Adana, Turkey, in 2008. In 2012 Maddie made her Paralympic debut in London as the youngest player on the GB Women's wheelchair basketball team. In seventh place, they achieved the best finish for a GB team since the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games. Later, Maddie played a crucial role in Great Britain's silver medal at the U25 European Championships, and last year, Maddie helped GB to a bronze medal at the U25 World Wheelchair Basketball Championships in Ontario, Canada. Today, current students at Lady Manners



Above: Charlotte Wood and (inset) her award-winning painting.

Left: Richard Lumsden.

Bottom: Maddie Thompson.

continue to keep up with the fantastic achievements of their predecessors.

Emma Botham, in Year 10 at Lady Manners, is currently ranked as sixth in the country in her category of under 15s discus. She has already gained several impressive achievements, including second place in the Mason's trophy competition, and first in the Youth District League competition. In the future, she hopes to achieve a medal at the

English Schools National Competition and her long-term dream would be to compete at the Olympics.

Charlotte Wood, age 17, studied at Lady Manners and left this summer after finishing her GCSEs to study Art and Design

“Students at Lady Manners continue to keep up with the fantastic achievements.”

at Chesterfield College. Out of 29,000 entries submitted, last year she won the BBC's Little Painting Challenge, gaining her a place in an exhibition at Whitworth Gallery in Manchester.

Charlotte says: “I like to draw a bit of everything, but mainly portraits and figures, using mediums such as acrylic, colouring pencils and fine liners. Last year I got my GCSE art results, with an A* and I am currently studying a BTEC Level 3 art and design. I hope to go to university to study illustration, preferably somewhere abroad, which would then lead on to an art-based job.

“Although my time at Lady Manners had its ups and downs, the art classes were absolutely amazing, I doubt I'd be as confident about my work if I'd have gone anywhere else.”

Incredibly, these students are already achieving phenomenal successes, but let's not forget the other students currently at Lady Manners, because the simple fact is, you never know who will turn out to be famous. ■

