

OC OF THE MONTH

April 2020



Simon Fleming (WG 2001)

A LEVELS: English, Chemistry and Biology

UNIVERSITY: Medicine at Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry

1. Tell us about yourself – where do you currently work, and how did you get into that?

I am currently taking a little time out from Orthopaedics to undertake a PhD in Medical Education. I have always been interested in making things better, in fixing things - it's what drove me to medicine, then to surgery and finally to orthopaedics. I am now looking into how we train our surgeons, to see if I can't make that a little better too! Before my PhD, I have worked all over the country, including hugely busy major trauma centres like the Royal London and some inspiring places like Great Ormond Street. I've also worked and taught all over the world, including a year in Australia and time in the USA, Canada and Africa!

2. What are some of your proudest achievements since graduating?

I've had a varied career, so my proudest achievements reflect that. The biggies are probably putting on a "standing room only" show in the West End when I was a student, giving my TEDx talk and starting a national (and internationally influential) anti-bullying campaign for healthcare, #HammerItOut...

3. What advice would you give someone who is looking to follow a similar career path?

Honestly, my advice is about backing yourself and about learning from failure. I am always open about the fact that I have failed a lot more than I've succeeded, but equally, I think that failure means feedback, and feedback is the breakfast of champions. I'd much rather mess up and be doing something I am passionate about than have an easy ride in a job or life that I hate.

4. Did your time at Highgate help you? If so, how?

Highgate gave me the education and start I needed to get where I am now. I learnt some powerful and valuable life lessons while a student at Highgate which have undeniably moulded me into the person I am today.

5. In three words, how would you describe Highgate?

Progressive, challenging, significant

6. What's next?

While I crack on with my PhD, I am still working to change culture in healthcare, working with government, regulators, organisations and individuals around the world - so, basically, the plan is to finish my degree and change the world, probably in that order.