

A Brew with



Robert Pierce, Graphic Designer

Welcome to A Brew with...! Each month, we catch up with an Outwood Family colleague to learn more about them and their career. This month, we caught up with Robert Pierce, Graphic Designer at OGAT!

First up, what are you drinking?

Strong Yorkshire Gold tea with heather moorland honey, semi-skimmed milk and an espresso chaser.

When did you first join the Outwood Family?

April 2013. I started as the graphic designer working for Outwood Grange Academy before being appointed at the Trust in 2017.

What were your initial thoughts when you began working at Outwood?

I'd spent 11 years working in the private sector so had very limited knowledge of the public sector; other than from a couple of colleges and universities we had as clients. I'd also not set foot in a school since the late 1990s. It was quite a culture shock.

What do you love most about your job?

Seeing students interacting with and absorbing information from graphic displays.

Back when I first started, I also enjoyed having one up on print suppliers when they used to try ripping us off. I had a very good idea of what print should have been costing so it was pretty easy to save academies hundreds of pounds.

"We actually look like a proper Post 16 centre, now!"

What is your favourite memory working at Outwood so far?

When a former head of Outwood Grange Academy Post 16 said: "We actually look like a proper Post 16 centre, now!" after I'd been asked to redesign the existing marketing material. I thought he was going to cry.

"The work her students produce is way beyond the level you'd expect to see at a secondary school."

Is there a particular colleague who you enjoy working with who you'd like to give a shout-out to?

Alison Jackson, Head of Art at Outwood Grange Academy. Alison was my first line manager when I started. The work her students produce is way beyond the level you'd expect to see at a secondary school. Although I studied A Level Art & Design, myself, I never really got my head around the course until I observed Alison teaching it 15 years later.

What do you think has been the biggest change since you began working at Outwood?

The size and speed at which we've grown and the challenges associated with that growth. I now need to work closely with staff to think about how one small idea from one academy can be utilised across multiple academies, across multiple counties, in the most effective way.

When you're not at work, how do you like to spend your time?

I live on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales so I enjoy solo hillwalking and walks with my family and our Dachshund, Barney. My daughter is now enthusiastic about walking from Malham Cove to Janet's Foss but it's more to do with the finish line ice cream I bribe her with. I'll have to dig deeper to get her into the Yorkshire Three Peaks. Maybe when she's old enough to enjoy a few light ales while waiting for the train home.



Which three people, dead or alive, would you want to have a brew with?

Rik Mayall - a comedy hero. His brand of slapstick, toilet humour was right up my street as a schoolboy. I can still re-enact whole scenes of The Young Ones and Bottom with like-minded comedy fans.

George Michael - one of the good guys and an exceptionally talented singer, songwriter and record producer. Ignore what the tabloids said about him.

And finally, Keith Floyd. Who wouldn't want to have a brew with Keith Floyd?! Ideally, it would be followed by a glass of sparkling wine which had been chilled using the propane fuel from a hot air balloon. All three are sadly missed.

