



COLIN PARNELL

Senior Actuary

YEAR OF LEAVING: 1999



INSPIRING LEARNING

What was your favourite subject at school and why?

I much preferred sports to schoolwork. However, when I was focused on work, biology and maths were my favourites. Biology, because I like to know the way that the natural world works. Maths, because I always thought it would get me a well-paid job.

What have you been up to since leaving school?

Actuary (statistics and financial maths), advising multi-million-pound pension funds on their investments, risk management and operations.

What experience and qualifications do you need to do your job, and do you have advice for current students looking to go into your sector?

Good numerate A-levels; typically, a good numerate degree; self-motivation to study for professional exams. We typically prefer graduates that have applied strong numeracy skills to a job or unpaid projects.

There are a wide range of roles to suit different people such as those that focus on communicating complex numerical issues and those that are more focused on technical matters such as computer programming.

What is one piece of advice you would give to current students?

At times, I focused all my energy on exams and my career to maximise my potential. I could be grumpy when distracted. However, true friends always understood my actions and enjoyed my success. My advice is to apologise immediately when you are annoying and properly recognise people that give you the space and support needed to succeed.

What challenges have you faced in your life so far, and how have you overcome them? What is your next big goal?

At times, I've failed exams, struggled at work and have become unhealthy unfit because of long hours spent working. However, I sleep easily and move on from failure knowing that I could not try any harder, act with integrity and my failures are tiny when compared to my successes.

Goals: next month, cycle across Wales in a day with my old Chepstow School mates; earn enough in the next few years so that I can choose a fun new career with no financial pressure.