



House Masters

Island School's new campus will open in August 2022. At this important point in the school's history the alumni network is coming together to support future generations of Islanders. Two of the newly formed Back to Borrett Road Founding Patrons, brother and sister Jimmy and Tehmi Master, Da Vinci, talk about their school experiences and why they are investing in education now.



Above: Tehmi and Jimmy at the Borrett Road construction site

School days

Tehmi: School gave me a huge sense of independence. By the time I was ready to go to university I felt really confident. I felt that I could manage on my own, I felt I could live on my own. When we [my brother and I] went to school there were no special tutors. If you were weak in something the teachers told you to come to school half an hour earlier for one-on-one support. And they managed us [the students] that way which was really really nice.

My education helped me because of the breadth of study. I didn't know what I wanted to do so I went into Social Sciences after school. I was an average student at school, but I did much better at university because I was ready for it. I hear that the students say the same thing today.

Jimmy: I came to Island School in 1972 starting in 6 Form [Year 12]. Island School was in the old British Military Hospital on the other side of Borrett Road then. A couple of weeks after joining [school] we were told that we would be moving to the upper school in the new building. So one fine day, a lesson was suspended, and we were told to pick up the tables and chairs and drag them across the road. We moved into the Da Vinci block and the zoo block, so called because it housed the school's zoo (also known as the biology block).

When 20 Borrett Road opened it was a very new school and I think the facilities were far superior to anything else in Hong Kong at that time. The other interesting thing was we had a number of different



Above: The Old British Military Hospital
Below: Students moving into 20 Borrett Road in 1973



cultures in the school. It was a great place where one could mix with other nationalities - it was good fun. It was an enjoyable diverse place to study. Island School's catchment area was in Mid-Levels so we all lived in a similar area.



Above: Teachers and students 1974.

Teachers

Tehmi: The teachers were all just a couple of years older than us so we had lots of fun times outside of school as well as inside of school. We sort of grew up together with them, especially by the time we reached our A-levels. We socialized with them. We were invited to their homes; it was a very informal fun atmosphere. I think everyone knew there was a line that could not be crossed.

Jimmy: David James was a History teacher when my daughters started at school. He then became Headmaster. I think he was truly exceptional in pretty much every way. Exceptional in the way he managed the school, managed the curriculum, and managed the children. He was and still is a very unique individual.



Above: David James Head Master 1988-2005 and colleagues

Investing in education

Jimmy: Hong Kong is a place where if we don't have an educated population we are simply not going to survive. China is way ahead of us in terms of education and technology. If we are going to have an impact as a city in Asia we need an

educated population and we have got to get it right.

Tehmi: Education is so important. If you don't give them [children] a wider, broader education, graduates are just not going to make it, it is just so competitive. It is a tough world out there.

In touch

Tehmi: My year group is 1975 - O levels. We have a What's App group and we stay in touch almost every single day with people all over the world. There are not many [1975 Islanders] left in HK. We have had a couple of reunions of our own and most people came back for the 50th celebrations. We are planning another reunion as soon as we can travel again.

Jimmy: There are about 20 people from my year group in HK and we have a What's App group of about 30 people from overseas. Many used to come to Hong Kong on a regular basis but not since Covid. But there are reunions in Sydney and London planned.

Below: ESF CEO, Belinda Greer and Principal, Stephen Loggie staff and students at the Borrett Road construction site

