



# Chris, Cricket and Community

**Island School's new campus will open in August 2022. At this exciting time in the school's history the alumni network is coming together to support future generations of Islanders and to help maintain their legacy. Ayaz Ebrahim, 1980, Nansen, has chosen to support Island School. He tells us how his school days shaped him.**



**Above:** Chris Forse participated in 'Sponge the teacher', a traditional activity of Island School teachers and students.

## Chris and Cricket

There were many great characters at Island School. I particularly remember Chris Forse, he was my history teacher. I think he was new when I was in the first year. I vividly remember talking to him about ancient civilizations. Chris Forse was a very animated and fun teacher with a passion for his subject - which was just great! Chris was also a big cricketer. He became Cricket Master so we had lots of practices together and Saturday matches. He was a really good cricketer. He always wanted to win but he wanted to do it in the right way. He demonstrated sportsmanship which had a good influence on me. Later he taught me Economics. In class we had great discussions, great debates and he showed us [the students] how to articulate our views like adults. Being at Island School helped me to mature and think about university and what I would do next.

## Community projects

At school I was very involved in the Student Union, when Sunil Nanda, 80W, was president. When John Lennon passed away we had a big concert in his name and raised money for charity. We also did Community Chest walks and raised money that way.

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The school also educated us about our position of privilege. We did lunch raffles. A few students would win the prized McDonalds lunch while most of us got a simple cup of soup. We [the students] were introduced to the idea that not everyone is like us and many people live in very different circumstances.

## Ayaz Ebrahim



**Above:** Ayaz Ebrahim, front row, center and his 5th form class

## First Steps

After school I went to the University of East Anglia in Norwich to study Accounting and Finance. I had only ever lived in Hong Kong. When starting university, I stepped foot in the UK for the first time. I would say that it took me about two terms to settle in. Back then you couldn't call home whenever you wanted. I had to call from a payphone with a bag of 50 pence pieces.

I remember my first student room was on the ground floor of the halls of residence and I could jump out the window onto the playing field. I think it was my second day when I saw some students having a kick around and I jumped out the window and asked if I could join them and they welcomed me. I wasn't much of a footballer but they were very welcoming. It turned out that I had introduced myself to the first 11 football team.

During an overseas student orientation day, we were walking around campus and I asked a fellow student if we could walk on the grass. Most of the grass in Hong Kong

has a keep off sign, except the cricket pitches!

At university I captained the first 11 cricket team and I was president of the accounting society and treasurer of the oriental society. I think I was the only Indian guy in the society but we had some great Chinese New Year celebrations.

## Next Steps

After University I went to Pricewaterhouse Coopers in London. It was great training for me but I never really enjoyed it. So after two years I called my dad and told him I was really not enjoying accounting. There was a long silence but he said he respected my decision but I should have said something before. He was right. That's why I think it is so important to have an open dialogue with my son. In 1991 I moved back to Hong Kong and worked for my Dad for a couple of months for his export business. But I really wanted to get my own job and I found one in the classified section of the South China Morning

Post. I applied for a job as a Listing Executive for the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and through that I got exposure to investment banking. I have worked for a number of different companies but for the last six years I have been at JP Morgan in Asset Management.

Currently we are "running" one hundred and eighty-five billion US dollars for different clients. I really enjoy the challenge of managing the numbers, resolving issues with colleagues and getting good feedback from clients.

## The Shape of Things

School helped to shape me. It was an important part of my life and my son's life, (Daanyal Ebrahim 20D, head student). We both have fond memories. Yasmin Ebrahim now sits on the School Council. Becoming a Back to Borrett Road Founding Patron gives us an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of Island School. ■