

## ALUMNI

*Liz Jones left Kenilworth in 2002 with three A-levels in English Language, Sociology and Drama and Theatre Arts - and an AS in Design Technology. She says it was a tough choice to drop technology as she was really tempted by a career in product design.*

As Liz has gone into writing for a career her words speak better than ours.

Despite getting into Kingston (London not Jamaica) to do drama, I chose English Language and Linguistics at Durham. Durham is a gorgeous place and my course was great. While at Durham I spent five months on the ERASMUS scheme in Szeged, a city two hours south of Budapest in Hungary. It was a scary but incredible experience - discovering a different language and culture along with students from right across Europe. Bill Bryson handed me my degree in Durham Cathedral - that was a pretty special moment. I'd pretty much decided on Durham because of his glowing review of it in 'Notes From a Small Island'.



At this point I knew I wanted to write, but also knew that I definitely didn't want to be a journalist or a novelist, not that 'novelist' is a particularly feasible career choice. I also knew academia wasn't for me. So when I graduated I just put 'writer' and 'London' into the Guardian Jobs website and applied to whatever I found.

In February 2006 I took a job in London at QVC - The Home Shopping Channel as a copywriter for their website. I had to write about everything from age-defying skin cream and pink ceramic elephants to little stairs that old dogs can use to get up onto the sofa. Some of my best friends now are from that job, it was a lot of fun.

Less than a year later I moved into a creative copywriter role at an advertising agency - and never looked back. As a copywriter you work in a close team with an art director, coming up with concepts for ads, then writing the copy while they create the design. It's very creative and demands quite a bit of strategic thinking too.

For the next eight years I worked at advertising agencies and in-house marketing departments - first as a permanent employee, then as a freelancer. My clients included Skype, Sky, Halifax, Charles Worthington, the Government and loads more.

Freelancing is awesome. Because you don't get any benefits, the pay is really good, so you can work for a few months then have a month off. Agencies are interesting places to work at too - there's usually a ping pong table or table football and always wine at your desk at 5pm. But there's also working until 3am (and being expected back in at 9am), scary egotistical Creative Directors and utterly crazy clients.

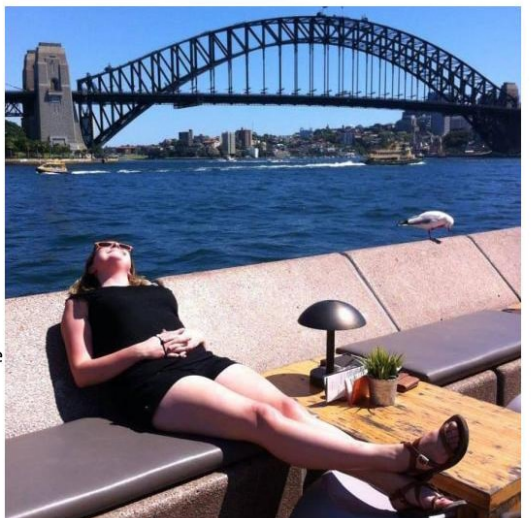
In London I lived in Brixton and worked all over the place - Hammersmith, Oxford Circus, Shoreditch and Battersea. I got about on a 125cc Vespa. I'm not sure how I'm still alive to be honest. In my last job in London I was made Head of Copy, put in charge of a team of writers and given the Google account. I actually won a couple of awards for an advertising campaign I did for Google - definitely a career highlight!

At the end of 2013 the relationship I was in finished, so I went to Perth (Australia not Scotland) to recuperate for a few weeks. A few weeks turned into two years and that takes us up to today! Right now I'm living in Melbourne, Australia, on a 4-year visa that's sponsored by my employer, and I love it. I am currently seeing a career coach though as I've started to feel like 10 years of writing for adverts and websites is enough for me!

One option I'm weighing up now is starting my own 'organised adventures' business. I recently put together a 12-hour scavenger hunt around Wales for a guy to propose to his girlfriend, complete with socks hidden around a castle, clues in caves and actors placed in pubs. I'd love to see if it could be a business.

So that takes us up to today.

My mum, Margaret, was in the SEN department at Kenilworth for many years, as a Teaching Assistant. Then she went to Warwickshire College to support kids with autism and Aspergers. She's retired now but working harder than ever looking after my sister's three daughters!



*Do you have any information about former Kenilworth students, working abroad, setting up their own businesses, if so please contact [alumninews@ksnadmin.ksn.org.uk](mailto:alumninews@ksnadmin.ksn.org.uk). In the next few weeks we are going to start featuring the many couples who met whilst at Kenilworth School and are now living happily ever after, if this applies to you then please contact us with your stories, pictures would also be much appreciated.*