



## Emily Coates

**THOMAS'S KENSINGTON  
CLASS OF 1992**

## Max Hunt

**THOMAS'S KENSINGTON  
CLASS OF 1994**

## Max Benitz

**THOMAS'S KENSINGTON  
CLASS OF 1996**

Last July, Thomas's Kensington was delighted to welcome back three alumni pupils who came to join in the end-of-year celebrations at Alumni Day and Prize Giving. There was much reminiscing, a tour of favourite 'haunts' and so many stories to entertain and inspire the current pupils. These ranged from tales of mountaineering to barefoot water skiing and from helicopter-flying missions to journalism, film production and script writing – something for everyone!

On Wednesday 3rd July we welcomed back two of our alumni, Emily Coates and Max Hunt, to join us in two special alumni assemblies. Emily Coates was at Thomas's in the late eighties/early nineties and one of her classmates was Emma Hunt. Emma's younger brother, Max, also attended Thomas's and he is a Thomas's dad too as his son, Badger, is in Year 1. We were able to reconnect these two families; it was a wonderful example of the years quite simply rolling back and the special shared memories that the alumni still have of their time at our school.

Emily was in my first-ever class at Thomas's Kensington so we had to start her visit with a quick trip to 3KS, which was our classroom! It was a much smaller room back then and Emily (and her mum) very much enjoyed a quick tour of the rest of the prep school, marvelling at the changes that had been made in the last 30 years! After Thomas's, Emily attended St Mary's Ascot and then studied Geography at Oxford. Emily is a huge fan of 'the great outdoors' and entertained us all with stories from treks all over the world. She is a mountaineer and currently resides in Wales, having founded her own company, 'Visit Wild Wales' and working for the Field Studies Council. It was a joy to have her back!

Max Hunt was something of a sporting legend in his time at Thomas's. Everyone knew Max as he was very talented at water-skiing and he skied barefoot! In his youth, Max was in fact the British under-13 water-ski champion. He was always up for an adventure and Max told the children about one of his great passions in life: flying helicopters. He trained in South Africa and loved it. Max is a highly skilled pilot and our eyes widened as he shared videos of him piloting various 'missions', including one with Bear Grylls. Badger was so proud to have his father lead an assembly and was on hand to help with the remote controlled helicopter that journeyed around the Lower School Dining Room during the presentation. It was very inspiring!

Prize Giving is a very special celebration that marks the end of each academic year at Kensington. This year was no exception, but this year we welcomed Max Benitz, a former pupil, back to be our guest speaker. Max has enjoyed a diverse career, both as an actor and a writer. His work in the creative industries began when he was cast in Peter Weir's 'Master and Commander' (2003). He read Modern History at the Universities of Edinburgh and Calcutta. He worked as a journalist in Afghanistan and his first book 'Six Months without Sundays'

was about the Afghan War. He worked at Ingenious, a media-financing company, in film and television development financing and executive producing. His first spec script was optioned and he has worked as a full-time script writer for a growing number of international clients ever since. Max proudly shared some of the highlights of his memories at Thomas's, including a special certificate issued in 1993 for 3rd place in the potato and spoon race! The audience at the Royal Geographical Society very much enjoyed hearing Max's advice to the younger generation of Thomas's pupils and none were more proud than Max's father, who also joined us for the event.

Our growing alumni community is something we are very proud of at Kensington. It really is proof that 'Once a Unicorn, always a Unicorn...'



### Allie Barnes Wright

Deputy Head, People and Culture.