

Liz Holpin (née Sewell)
Attended 1972 to 1980

I joined our family business The Cotton Patch in 1994. It followed a career in computing with IBM for 5 years and scuba diving for a few years where I taught diving and worked as a divemaster in the Cayman Islands. My responsibilities at The Cotton Patch are quite varied and include finance, sales, IT and purchasing. The business is a retailer of patchwork and quilting supplies via our shop in Hall Green, Birmingham, the internet and telephone and at the various craft and patchwork shows that we attend throughout the UK. We now employ around 30 people.

My experience of Saint Martin's provided me with an extremely valuable foundation that gave me the confidence to pursue various careers. The variety of extra curricular activities, as well as the solid foundation of learning, were particularly key.

For example, I started my Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and achieved my Bronze Award at Saint Martin's. Whilst at Manchester University, where I studied Economics and Accounting, I joined the Duke of Edinburgh's Society becoming Treasurer and Expedition Leader in my final year. This was a key factor in being selected to take part in Operation Raleigh in New Zealand where I learnt to scuba dive, which several years later led to my becoming a scuba diving instructor in the Cayman Islands! It demonstrated to me that having opportunities at an early stage whilst at school can open up many possibilities later.

I was delighted to be able to use my skills from the various businesses that I've been involved in when I was asked to join Saint Martin's as a School Governor in 2004 which I did for 5 years. It was clear from my involvement that the school's ethos has remained true and that the range of both curricular and extra-curricular activities that I had personally experienced has been maintained resulting in confident and well-rounded individuals. The enthusiasm, knowledge and the dedication of the teaching staff at Saint Martin's seems to be a key factor in achieving the wonderful results that it does on an individual basis.