

# Outside interests

➤ **Laura Blows discovers the skills, interests and hobbies industry people have outside the world of pensions**

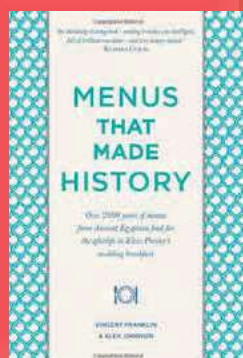
## Arts



I have been painting in my studio in St Leonards during lockdown, gaining inspiration from the changing seasons, which

I have now had the privilege to watch slowly unfolding in East Sussex for the past year. I am running out of space so will need to put on another show in the autumn. I am a colourist, which just means I use colours in an interesting and original way [*website: simonchinnery.com*]

**LGIM head of client solutions, Simon Chinnery**



Obviously Vince is a wonderful actor who's played some great roles on stage and screen, across comedy and drama. But he's also written a fascinating book, *Menus that made history*, which flirted with the bestseller lists last Christmas. Each menu gives readers an insight into the social history of that moment in time. He's working on the sequel at the moment,

which I believe is about the drinks that made history. And as if that weren't enough... he's a superb artist and gave us all a linocut workshop last year.

**Quietroom development lead, Joe Craig on Quietroom co-founder, Vincent Franklin**



I have never given up my ballet training. And last year, despite Covid-19 challenges, moving to a new job, and two young kids I went back

to the examination room after 24 years and took my Intermediate Exam at the RAD Headquarters in Battersea. Ballet is my 'happy place', I love the music, the movement and the freedom. My exam was quite an experience, as the first exam was cancelled due to lockdown, but Lady Luck allowing us to rearrange just before Christmas. With my exam number pinned on, and new shoes ready, my 'presentation of the year for 90 minutes' was here and I was blown away to pass with a distinction. One of the last things off my bucket list before I turned 40 – successfully achieved!

**Kempen Capital Management FM Business Development director, Lara Edmonstone-West**

I'm an author, screenwriter and musician. My 16th book is coming out in January. Among a certain audience who have far too little interest in pensions, I'm best



known as the author of the bestselling Jimmy Coates series – action-thrillers in the style of *The Bourne Identity*, but for 8-13 year olds. I started my work-life as a musician, writing music for film, TV and theatre and songs for boybands. Last year I wrote the lyrics for a Latvian pop star's first English language album. I've also worked as a cartoonist and a dating coach (not at the same time) and, as a keen amateur, I coach cricket.

**Quietroom development lead, Joe Craig**

## Sport/exercise



Hockey can teach you about leadership, strategy and improve your social skills, but this wasn't what drew me to the game. It was the excitement of being first to the ball with a big stick and firing it – with force – towards the goal.

My playing days have changed a little since those early outings nearly 40 years ago. There is more surprise than

excitement if I am first to the ball and score. And other actuarial attributes – strategy and risk assessment – dominate my now defensive role.

As well as being a regular player and captain for Worcester 3s I also manage a couple of the junior teams and support the wider organisational side of Worcester Hockey Club. It is exciting times too as later this year we will play home fixtures at a brand new, purpose built, International standard hockey centre initiated as a joint venture with a local school.

**Barnett Waddingham head of corporate consulting, Midlands, Jane Ralph**



I am a master scuba diver and trained in the cold waters of the UK, practicing rescues off the Isle of Wight in the middle of a snowstorm! I have been involved in real rescues and have suffered an underwater emergency myself when equipment failed at 30 metres. I've seen lots of wonderful sights. A humpback whale once came to look at me while I was deep diving off West Caicos. This is unusual as they hate scuba noise. I feel very privileged – looking into the eye of a humpback makes you appreciate nature more.

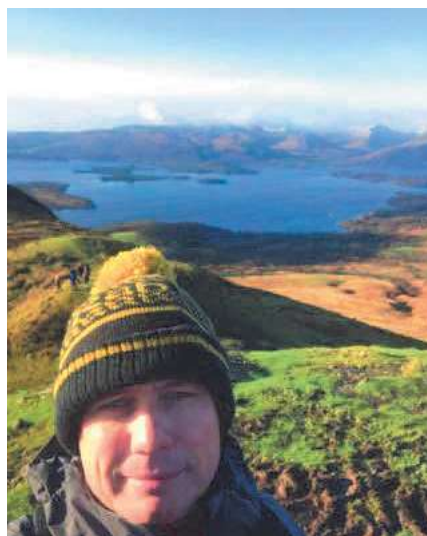
**PSIG chair, Margaret Snowdon**

My principal hobby is Judo, 'the gentle way', although to be honest it's anything but gentle – to enjoy Judo means you have to enjoy combat and contact. Sadly,



there has been no judo for some time and this looks likely to continue until all Covid restrictions are lifted. Instead, and as a family, we windsurf. In practical terms this means my kids steal all my kit and, as they compete as part of national and regional squads, I am relegated to the role of 'shore parent'.

**ClearGlass Analytics CEO and co-founder, Chris Sier**



In order to look after my health and general wellbeing I have sought a new hobby in 'Munro bagging'. For the uninitiated, this is climbing Scotland's Munros (a Munro is a mountain in Scotland over 3000ft and there are 282 Munros). It's not simply about climbing these but it's also good to take time planning and researching for them.

**Capita head of proposition and pension software, Charlie Lambert**



Growing up in Sub-Saharan Africa, I have always spent most of my free time outdoors and I have had a love of both the canoe and

the kayak for over 40 years, due to the freedom that being on the open water gives you. It's quite hairy at times but it's the perfect way to unwind from tackling the complex world of pension policy. My son and I have twice completed the Wye Challenge, which is a gruelling 100 miles of paddling over a long weekend.

**B&CE director of policy and external affairs, Phil Brown**

Although resolving not to do another marathon again after doing the London Marathon in 2006, where I finished just outside the three-hour mark, I picked up my running shoes again in earnest early 2017. My first attempt was in Paris April, 2017, which failed owing to injury. Next stop was Frankfurt in October 2017 where I succeeded six months ahead of my 50th birthday. London April 2018 followed next, the day after my 50th birthday, for an Alzheimer's charity. This was the hot one (25 degrees) and



where memorably I suffered from heat exhaustion after the finish. New York was next on the list in November 2018 and finally April 2019, aged 51, I did my personal best of 2:58:29. I have been waiting patiently to complete my next marathon – London, in October – all being well and injuries permitting!

**Hub Financial Solutions business development director, Adrian Cooper**

## Entertainment



Since we were in school, my oldest friends and I have played a game called *Magic The Gathering*. It's very nerdy and even now I'm reluctant to

admit playing. You buy cards, put them in a 'deck' of your own design, and then play that deck against your friend's own design. There are over 20,000 cards to choose from, so there's real variety and strategy. The cards are also collectibles. Some are worth tens of thousands. There's a limit to what I'll personally spend on a piece of cardboard, but that limit keeps creeping up whenever I lose!

**Aries Insight pension technical consultant, Gareth Stears**

In my spare time (and prior to the pandemic of course), I did my best Bradley Walsh/Jeremy Clarkson/Alexander Armstrong impression and hosted a monthly quiz night for the local community. Nothing too exciting – the winning team shares four bottles of wine between them as first prize – but most people seem to enjoy it anyway and don't take it too seriously! There are a few

laughs as well as keeping the old brain cells active. I remember once asking where you would find a man with three legs and a cat with no tail. Rather than the anticipated response of the Isle of Man, one team suggested that the answer was Chernobyl!

**PSIG deputy chair, Tommy Burns**



I am an improviser with the Free Association. I play in a few of their weekly house shows and have appeared on their podcasts from time to time. Improv is made up, silly, terrifying fun. I like that there's a mystery to it. Stand up, while great, makes sense. That person wrote and prepped those jokes. No one knows what made a good improv show good. People try to figure it out, but any attempt to replicate always fails. It usually comes down to nebulous things like being present, supportive, and brave. In an effort to give improv its fair dues, I will say, bad improv is one of the worst experiences you will ever have. But great improv is one of the greatest experiences you can have in a theatre. It feels like magic. Mostly, because it is. We are all witches and should be burned at the stake.

**Quietroom office manager, Nick Adamson**

## Music



Rhys is a highly acclaimed singer-songwriter and has performed all over the world. His songs have been on Radio 2, BBC 6 Music and in heavy rotation on BBC Radio Wales.

**Quietroom development lead, Joe Craig on Quietroom strategy director, Rhys Williams**



I have long had a passion for gemmology [the science dealing with natural and artificial gemstone materials] which originally came about following a nine-year spell in Italy where all

things aesthetic are keenly appreciated. I can be found hunched over my gemmologist loupe at weekends.

I also took up the lever harp over lockdown, which, apart from its Celtic association, which appealed to my Welsh roots, is kinder to the neighbours than my instrument, the violin.

**Newton Investment Management real return team investment strategist, Catherine Doyle**

The hat I wear by day is that of Quietroom's responsible and capable finance manager. We work with loads of trustees, pension providers and other grown-up financial institutions, and I ask

them, ever so nicely, for money. These wonderful folks may be surprised to learn that by night I often wear another hat (well, other hats and many, many wigs). No, I'm not a drag artiste on Amateur Night, I'm a professional opera singer at (amongst other places) The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and English National Opera.



**Quietroom finance manager, Jochem Van Ast**



I play keyboards in my band Shardlake. Together for over 10 years now, we regularly play at Glasgow's top live music venue, The Ferry, to capacity crowds, as well as many festivals and charity events.

Shardlake are passionate purveyors of the finest rock music known to humanity, from Led Zeppelin to Queen to Guns N' Roses to Muse. [FB: @ShardlakeRock and <https://shardlakerock.com/>]

**Institutional business professional, Andy Dickson**

## Misc

I like to use things and not see waste. So, I've made my own essential oils from lavender and rose hips from my garden. It's a bit odd as essential oils aren't something I use, but I like to use things.

I also made rosehip jam (which is a right pain as you have to get the right part of the bud and discard the rest, so has to be done one by one for a couple of hundred of them!) and rose water from roses.

**ITS director, Akash Rooprai**



I'm a local councillor at St Albans District Council. I've done it for 10 years and (cough) just got re-elected with a big majority. Apart from answering constituents' questions about bin collection and parking tickets, I mostly focus on environmental issues (I'm the council's only Green). So with the growing focus of the pensions industry on ESG and specifically climate risks, my two worlds have become ever closer recently.

[Simon is also an accomplished actor, having been a Death Eater in the Harry Potter films and one of the Tweenies!]

**Quietroom director, Simon Grover**

Around four years ago I was looking to get more involved in the local community and I began volunteering with a local almshouse charity that specialises in social housing for elderly women in the local area. In my role as the trustee treasurer, I take responsibility for the accounts and manage our endowment – so an ideal crossover from my work in pensions. As well as the social housing we also use our income to make grants to other charities in the area that need support for specific initiatives; allowing us to have a much broader impact in the local community.

**SEI Institutional Group client partner, Kris Shergold**



My two preschoolers have been entertained by my efforts at balloon modelling, starting with a sword and shield, followed by 12 more swords and

shields as the boys fought each other and burst them. It's a great wee hobby though, especially as I make the kids guess what it is first, then tell them they're right, as if I had always intended to make a giraffe and not a dog. One of my favourites is a Loch Ness monster, not to scale [pictured].

**Barnett Waddingham actuary, Julie Baillie**

When I'm not focusing on pensions, a real switch off from work comes in my dog agility hobby. You may have seen this at Crufts where dogs and their handler run as fast as they can around a set course of obstacles, jumps tunnels, seesaws and weaves in split second runs against other competitors. Now we're back out of lockdown, training is on twice a week, competitions are back and it's an opportunity to have a fantastic amount of fun with my dog. It's more prolific than you think with World Championships and a Great Britain squad. Ollie and I are not quite there yet.....!

**Capita head of marketing, pensions and HRS, Jemima FitzMorris**

