

Name: Rebecca Sherriff (nee Brown)

Age: 30

Year graduated from Ousedale: 2007



**What qualifications did you gain at Ousedale?**

GCSE		French	C	A Level		AS Level		
Geography	A	Maths	B	Geography	A	World Development		A
English Literature	A	Art	B	Leisure Studies	B	Art		B
D&T: Graphics	A	English Language		C	Photography	B		
RE	A	Double Science		C				

**Did you pursue any Further or Higher education? College/Apprenticeship/University/study while working**

After a year out to work and travel, I went onto the University of East Anglia to study BSc Environmental Geography and International Development. Since starting work I have also attended many professional development courses through my work, and some online courses on Future Learn to keep up to date with relevant subjects or improve my skills further.

**What was your career aspiration while you were at school, if your career path changed what changed your mind?**

I was never really sure what I wanted to be at school. I went through a phase of wanting to be a window dresser and a dance teacher. I think my ambition was defined though when I went on a school trip to a school in India. That trip encouraged me to take on an extra AS Level in World Development and my interest in International Development started from there. I followed this career path through university and this has merged into a career working closer to home in community development. Now I work to support people to fulfil their potential and break down barriers to ensure people get equal opportunities. I'd say you never really know what you want to be, but your experiences help carve the way for you.

**What did you enjoy most about your school life at Ousedale?**

I think I most enjoyed sixth form and the chance to focus my time on fewer subjects that were of most interest to me. I also made new friendships and got involved in more activities. I loved being in the Jesus Christ Superstar production!

**Current job title and description of your role?**

I am a Volunteering & Participation Consultant with the National Trust. Within the Trust we work on lots of different areas of work such as conservation and heritage, but my focus is around people, primarily supporting National Trust properties to manage volunteers and involve communities in their work. The organisation wants to be more inclusive and relevant to a wider range of people, so my role as a consultant is to act as a specialist and advise people on how we can improve.

**What advice would you give our current students about the world of work?**  
Do the things you enjoy and take every opportunity to learn and develop. The experiences you have will help influence the opportunities available to you. People who are passionate and driven can achieve great things and have most impact.

**How did you achieve this role?**

I worked in several organisations in the charity sector before joining the National Trust, where I built up my experience of communities and my understanding of the challenges people face in their lives. This meant I had specialist knowledge about the local community which suited the role I applied for with the National Trust. I started off based at one property (Stowe) and since then have been promoted to support across the whole of London and South East. Volunteering has always played a very important role in developing my skills and experience for my career. I am still volunteering now in order to learn new things and prepare me for future opportunities.

**Name:** Sophie Lamming

**Age:** 39

**Year graduated from Ousedale:** 1998

**What qualifications did you gain at Ousedale?**

GCSEs/BTECs:	7 GCSEs A-C	A-Levels:	GB and US Politics	B
			English Language	B
			Sociology	B

**Did you pursue any Further or Higher education? College/Apprenticeship/University/study while working**

I studied for a degree in nursing but realised halfway through it wasn't for me! I decided to find a career that would allow me to travel so I started as a holiday rep which progressed to resort manager. I spent 7 years living abroad in countries such as Egypt, Austria, Cyprus, Greece and Spain. When I returned I worked in a nursing home to earn whilst I studied and qualified as a hairdresser. It was a career I was looking to pursue at the time but wanted to gain as many new experiences and qualifications as I could. I then moved to Brighton training as an accounts manager, working my way up within the industry, I then moved back to MK to further my career helping big well-known brands make better decisions in their customers' experiences.



**What was your career aspiration while you were at school? If your career path changed what changed your mind?**

I actually had no idea. There was very little support back then. We saw a careers officer where we were given a ring binder of suggested jobs and told to pick one. I'm sure today you are given more inspiration, advice and experiences!

**What did you enjoy most about your school life at Ousedale?**

I mostly enjoyed my time in Ousedale. There were some great teachers; I had a good group of friends. I really enjoyed 6<sup>th</sup> Form – I think that was my favourite part of my time there.

**Current job title and description of your role?**

I own Baby Sensory and Mini Professors MK. We run baby development classes the focus on sights, sounds, scents and sensations. It's so much fun and so incredibly beneficial to their development. We run 23 classes across MK a week with two other class leaders that work with me. I've had the pleasure of many old class mates from Ousedale come and join me with their babies – including Mrs Montague your Careers Leader! I also run Mini Professors which is a science club for 2-5 year olds. Our professors study a new topic every week from dinosaurs to teeth to space to Polar Regions to electricity and so much more! They love getting stuck in with experiments every week!

**How did you achieve this role?** After I fell pregnant with my daughter Willow-Rose (now 5), I decided that the long hours, long commutes and demanding role was just not going to fit in with my new life – but I wanted to find something that really put something back into the community. I wanted to find something that would challenge me, but also allow my new family to come first. I decided to completely retrain, and take a huge risk in starting my own business. I had thought hard and had worked out what would happen in each eventuality if it didn't work out. I had 'left doors open' in my previous career should I need to return. I worked really hard on a business plan, spent a long time retraining and attending lots of courses especially around how our babies brains work. I loved it! I knew if I put the work in, was passionate about what I was doing and held high standards then it would work. I spent lots of time on social media, and out and about in towns handing leaflets out to build the brand up.

**What advice would you give our current students about the world of work?**

Try everything! Always leave great impressions even when you leave a job. You never know when you might meet those people again in other companies! Work hard – set yourself apart, maintain high standards, whatever you choose to do. No job is too small, and nothing is beneath you. Follow your passions – if you work hard at something you love, work seems a much nicer place to be!