

## Mountbatten Alumni Weddings

It appears that the Mountbatten experience doesn't just enhance your professional life! Here, we are delighted to share with you 4 Mountbatten wedding stories (in their own words) to turn your attention to the other benefits of participating in the Programme. It's worth a mention that the September 2002 New York intake seems to have been a bumper one for romance - 3 out of the 4 following weddings are from this cohort!



### **Jamie Williams and Simone Ruffin** (September 2002 – New York)

Simone and Jamie both headed to New York on the September 2002 intake. They first met in the elevator of the Walcott Hotel and became friends straight away. Despite Simone's concern over Jamie's clothes being more suitable for a beach than for Manhattan, they had a first date at Joe's Pizza on Carmine Street, and soon became a Mountbatten couple. They spent a lot of time together in New York. Simone took Jamie shopping and Jamie took Simone to see the New York Rangers.

They headed back to London together in October 2003 and rented a place soon after in West London. Having both worked in Film Production in New York, Jamie moved into advertising and Simone into Fashion. Seven years later, on a trip back to New Zealand to see Simone's family Jamie took Simone to lunch at a vineyard on Waiheke Island, got down on one knee and proposed. They married in Cambridgeshire on 26th June 2010 with several of their Mountbatten friends in attendance. They now live in Earsfield, south west London.



### **Sarah Farrar and Gordon Johnson**

(September 2002 – New York) met on the same intake. Sarah remembers Gordon introducing himself to her at Heathrow, saying that his parents lived down the road from hers but he doesn't recall this! Living in the same apartment block (James Madison Apartments) and working in the same building (25 West 45th Street - Gordon at IMN and Sarah at Custom F/X Inc) inevitably led to time spent together. Sarah's friend Nicky worked with Gordon and takes credit for being a go-between resulting in the first kiss at an infamous night in the White Star, NJ. (Sarah promptly passed out after this kiss!).

### **The proposal**

They returned to New York (for the first time together) in April 2010. Unknown to Sarah, Gordon had a few locations in mind to propose, such as the restaurant where they had their first date (Cafe Asean) or the

whispering gallery in Grand Central Station. Sarah thought it strange that Gordon asked her to go and fill the hotel's ice bucket at 8am the next morning (to get her out of the room so he could put the ring in his pocket). So the first morning of holiday they set off to get coffee and bagels to have in Bryant Park (where they used to have lunch together) and Gordon seemed quite keen to get the breakfast from the nearest deli to the park (Sarah put this down to hunger). When Sarah suggested a table near the park gates, Gordon said, 'no, let's find somewhere nice to sit' - Sarah thought this was very out of character... They sat in a lovely spot by the lawn and then came the words 'Before we start, I've something very important to ask you...' Then swearing, tears, sobs (from Sarah of course), calls to family, bagels & coffee and an engagement!!! Perfect.

### **Wedding**

They had a Civil Ceremony and Reception at The Castlefield Rooms in Manchester on Saturday 13th August 2011. They chose this venue despite living in London because their families lived in Manchester. The Castlefield Rooms offered a modern, unusual venue in central Manchester, in a stunning position within a conservation area on the banks of the Bridgewater Canal. They thought a city centre wedding was a nod towards the city environment in which they got together. They were lucky that six of their Mountbatten friends could be there on the day, as they were at the beginning.

Sarah managed to sneak a New York theme into the wedding with the invitations, table names and table decorations. Gordon managed to get his Star Wars cake though!

They have since relocated to Manchester.

On 27 October 2012 Mountbatten alum **Steve Arnold** (August 2007 - London) married Hartley Kurtz in Tucson, AZ. Steve is currently a member of JPMorgan's commercial lending team; Hartley is an advertising executive. The couple live in Chicago. The celebration was attended by the following former Mountbattens (all London August 2007) who had flown in for the event from around the world: Lynn Hu (Boston), Stephanie Zhu (Atlanta), Kyle Gisbrecht (Chicago), and Chris Holman (London).



Left to right: Lynn Hu, Chris Holman, Steve Arnold (groom), Hartley Kurtz (bride), Kyle Gisbrecht and Stephanie Zhu.

**Michelle McLaren and Alexander Munro** (September 2002 – New York)

We were both on the September 2002 intake and sat a couple of seats apart on the flight out. We became friends and chatted most mornings on the Path train into the city. Our first date was in Dorians (!) followed by a January leaver's night out. We had an amazing few months in New York and it was great that we shared the same friends and could be together without missing out on other goings on.

We both moved to London shortly after returning from New York desperately seeking the British equivalent of NY's bright lights and have been here ever since. We got married in 2008 with a fair contingent of Mountbattens as wedding guests and now have two children; Charlie (3) and Mabel (10 months).

Both of us class our year in New York as one of the best times of our lives and we still regard New York as a second home. It was an amazing experience that we both shared and of course it is a great story of how we met. We can't wait to introduce our children to the city once they can survive the time difference and certainly hope the opportunity to do something similar will still be around for them in years to come. Some of our closest friends are from the programme and we still meet up when we can. Of course now we have children (and with the exception of the recent 10 year reunion), the nights out aren't quite what they used to be!



Thank you alums for all your contributions to this article. If anyone else would like to share their wedding in a forthcoming issue, please get in touch.