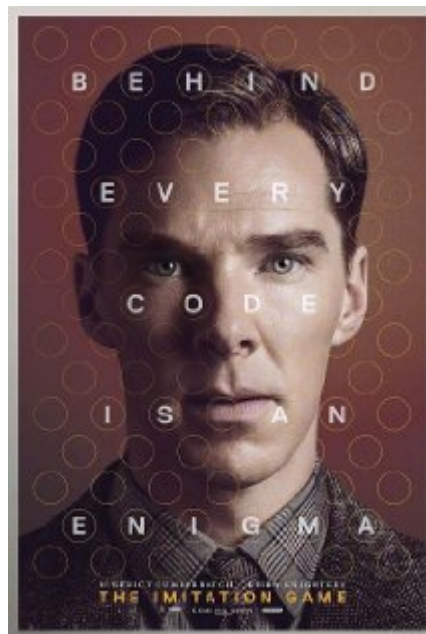


## 'And the Academy Award goes to...' Sherborne School and the Oscars

Sherborne School is currently making its presence felt on the big screen.

Not only has the School recently provided the set for two new films, *The Imitation Game* (2014) and *Far from the Madding Crowd* (2015), but two Old Shirburnian actors can currently be seen in two hugely successful films, Hugh Bonneville (d 1977-1981) in *Paddington* (2014) and Charlie Cox (c 1996-2001) in *The Theory of Everything* (2014). And, of course, Benedict Cumberbatch, himself the son of an Old Shirburnian, is portraying Old Shirburnian Alan Turing (h 1926-1931) in *The Imitation Game* (2014).

The 87<sup>th</sup> Academy Award nominations for the 2015 Oscars see *The Imitation Game* (2014) with eight nominations, including Best Picture and Best Actor, and *The Theory of Everything* (2014) with one nomination for Best Picture. But we will have to wait until 22 February 2015 to find out who will win a coveted Oscar.



Jeremy Irons (b 1962-1966) is the only Old Shirburnian to date known to have won an Oscar. This was for his portrayal of Claus von Bülow in *Reversal of Fortune* (1990) in which he starred alongside Glenn Close. However, with a number of new films in the pipe line - *La Corrispondenza* (2015), *High-Rise* (2015), *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), and *Race* (2016) – he will no doubt be adding a few more awards to his mantelpiece in the future. It was while he was at Sherborne that Irons first took to the stage, appearing as Mr Puff in the 1966 production of *The Critic*.

Daniel Day-Lewis currently holds the record for male actor to have won the most Oscars for Best Actor in a Leading Role (*My Left Foot*, *There will be Blood*, and *Lincoln*). Daniel may have gone to Bedales, but his father the Poet Laureate Cecil Day-Lewis (d 1917-1923) and his step-brother Nicholas Day-Lewis (d 1947-1952) both came to Sherborne. Incidentally, Katharine Hepburn holds the record for female actor to have won the most Oscars for Best Actress in a Leading Role, with four wins (*Morning Glory*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *The Lion in Winter*, and *On Golden Pond*).

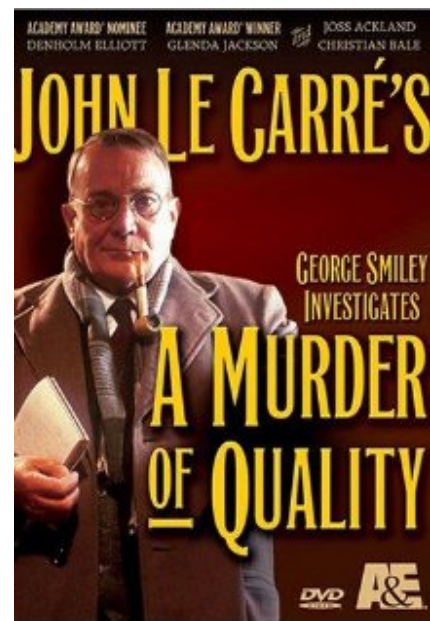
Today, Roland Young (a 1902-1906) is a largely forgotten Old Shirburnian actor, yet he appeared in many Hollywood films. Young can be seen in *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) alongside Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn and Jimmy Stewart, and received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in *Topper* (1937) in which he starred with Cary Grant and Constance Bennett. Although Young never received an Oscar he is probably the only Old Shirburnian to have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.





Before *The Imitation Game*, one of the most famous films made at Sherborne School was *Goodbye, Mr Chips* (1969). The film which starred Peter O'Toole and Petula Clark received two Oscar nominations: Best Actor for Peter O'Toole and Best Score of a Musical Picture for Leslie Bricusse and John Williams. However, the film was up against some tough opposition at that year's Academy Awards with the result that John Wayne won Best Actor for *True Grit* and *Hello, Dolly!* won Best Score of a Musical Picture. Apparently, Peter O'Toole is the only actor to refuse an honorary Oscar. He wrote to the Academy telling them that he wanted to "win the lovely bugger outright"; although he later changed his mind and accepted the award.

Many of John le Carré's (h 1945-1948) novels have been adapted for film, and one, *A Murder of Quality*, was filmed in Sherborne. The 1991 adaptation starred Denholm Elliott as George Smiley alongside Glenda Jackson, Joss Ackland, Diane Fletcher, David Threlfall and Christian Bale. In 2005, Rachel Weisz won Best Actress in Supporting Role for her portrayal of Tessa Quayle in the film adaptation of le Carré's *The Constant Gardener*, and in 2011 *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* received three nominations for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Gary Oldman), Best Original Music Score (Alberto Iglesias) and Best Adapted Screenplay (Bridget O'Connor and Peter Straughan).



Richard Eyre (h 1956-1961), another Westcott House boy, has directed many films, including *Iris* (2001), *Stage Beauty* (2004), *Notes on a Scandal* (2006), and *The Other Man* (2008).



*Iris* (2001) received three Oscar nominations with Jim Broadbent winning Best Actor in a Supporting Role for his portrayal of Iris Murdoch's husband, John Bayley. The film also starred Hugh Bonneville (d 1977-1981) who won the New Talent Award at the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival for his portrayal of the young John Bayley.

*Notes on a Scandal* (2006) received four Oscar nominations: Best Actress (Judi Dench), Best Actress in a Supporting Role (Cate Blanchett), Best Original Score (Philip Glass), and Best Adapted Screenplay (Patrick Marber), and won Eyre the Teddy Audience Award at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival.

But even if no Old Shirburnians are awarded a gold statuette at this year's Academy Awards, with James Purefoy (d 1977-1980) and Jeremy Irons (b 1962-1966) both appearing in the forthcoming film adaptation of J.G. Ballard's cult thriller *High Rise*, perhaps Sherborne may one day be able to boast another Oscar.

Rachel Hassall  
5 February 2015