

From Leigh Park to Hollywood – movie maker visits school



AWARD-WINNING From left, Ashlea-Rose Gillard, 13, Emilly Briggs, 13, senior media technician Samuel Carter-Brazier, with, at the front, John Fletcher and Amber Clarke, 13

Picture: Malcolm Wells (143227-6045)

by **JEFF TRAVIS**

Havant and Leigh Park reporter
jeff.travis@thenews.co.uk

HE'S rubbed shoulders with Hollywood superstars like Tom Cruise and Russell Crowe.

But John Fletcher will never forget his roots in Leigh Park and the 48-year-old delighted school pupils when he came to deliver his inspiring story of how he made it big in the movie industry.

John left Park Community School – then called Broomfield – with three CSEs in 1982.

He is now marketing director for Paramount Pictures UK, one of the biggest film studios in the world, and has films such as *Noah* and *Jack Reacher* under his belt.

John, who grew up in Warren Park and whose sister Linda still lives in West Leigh, was managing director of Pathe Distribution for six years – masterminding films such as *The Iron Lady* and *The Queen*.

He told *The News*: 'I do a lot of talking

Film mogul returns to his old school and tells young people how sheer hard work can pay off

and presentations, but this is probably the most nervous I have been in years.

'Pulling in through the gates today, the school is completely different.

'If just one of these kids, whatever they want to do, looked at me and thought "If he can do it, I can do it", then that's the main reason I came here today.'

John described himself as the 'class clown' who loved performing.

After studying at Highbury College, he went to drama school and later appeared in *The Bill* and *Casualty* in the 1980s.

After dabbling in the world of advertising, he got his big break in 2000 at Pathe.

He went on to help Pathe achieve their highest-grossing box office with £31.5m for *Slumdog Millionaire*, which he helped to market as a 'feelgood' movie.

He was awarded a Bafta for his work

on the psychological thriller *Memento*.

John said: 'Clearly it can look glamorous. But there's a reality and pressure to it. These films cost a lot of money and they have to make their money back.

'Ultimately it's a business. Creative people and business people are normally polar opposites, but I work in an industry where they have to work together – and my job falls literally right in the middle of that.'

Emilly Briggs, 13, said she was inspired.

'I want to work in front or behind the cameras,' she said.

'It's good he came from this area because it's badly stereotyped.'

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