

Julie Gabbott - Class of 1998

Former Priory pupil scoops gold as she is named as one of the world's best tour guides.

Julie Gabbott beat off competition from 2,000 guides to win Gold at Wanderlust Magazine's World Guide Awards, 2018. The former Penwortham Priory Academy pupil was praised for her humour, empathy and organisational skills.

Chair of the judging panel revealed, "Julie impressed every single judge; her fun but determined personality shone through in the dozens of testimonials we received from her grateful customers. She has clearly inspired and transformed the lives of others, and left us all awestruck at her accomplishments."

Julie said: "I'm still overwhelmed. The calibre of the people I was up against is amazing, so it's a bit of a shock."

Having been bitten by the travelling bug on a trip to Australia aged 19, she quit her job in a solicitor's practice to pursue her dream job, which has seen her travel across the globe, including East Africa, the Himalayas, Beijing and Istanbul.

As an overland tour leader for Dragoman since 2013, she is responsible for organising every element of trips, including booking accommodation and permits, checking local political advice, and driving and maintaining a 14-tonne lorry.

The self-confessed travel addict said: "It's a lot of pressure, but every day is different. "I'll go anywhere, but I particularly love mountains, and big animals, so Africa is a favourite of mine."

Julie's next tour sets off next month, taking in West Africa, from Dakar to Cape Town. She plans to split her £5,000 bursary for winning Gold between charitable projects.



Words courtesy of Catherine Musgrove, LEP and former Priory pupil.