



Dame Alice Owen's School

Newsletter ~ March 2024



Letter from the Head **Hannah Nemko**

As we move into the Easter holiday, the school is awash with excitement for a number of trips, visits and events. Students from Year 10 and above will be spending eight days exploring the history and culture of Jordan. Highlights include a visit to Jerash, known as the Pompeii of the East, and widely regarded as the best-

preserved city of the Roman Decapolis; archaeologists have found the ruins of settlements dating back to the Neolithic Age. Students will also visit Madaba, home to the Greek Orthodox Church, where the famous 6th century Mosaic Map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land is housed. They will of course visit Petra, float in the Dead Sea and spend the night in Wadi Rum, one of the world's most beautiful deserts.

Year 9 and 10 students will be going on a football tour of Florida where they will attend training sessions led by elite coaches before having the opportunity to play against local sides, all whilst having the opportunity to benefit from all the best that Florida has to offer tourists – from watching Orlando City train, riding thrilling rides at Universal Studios and splashing around at Aquatica Water Park.

Closer to home the sixth form have enjoyed their visit to CERN, where they were able to learn more about the Hadron Collider and the associated physics that this entails; and we have been delighted to welcome both the Spanish and French exchange students to our school, revelling in sharing our culture and quirks with them before our students embark on the return journey later in the summer term.

We all thoroughly enjoyed the school musical *The Addams Family* which was beautifully brought to life by a cast of 73, an orchestra of 16 and the careful choreography of our more senior students.



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNORS

See p.3.

ACTIVE SCHOOL LIFE

Read more on pp.6-13.

WHAT A TERM!

Learn more on pp.14-34. It's our school!



We have many sporting successes that you can read about in the pages that follow, but our most exciting is that our team of four young badminton players have been crowned National Champions after a long tournament which saw them travelling all over the place to play from Sheffield to Amersham! Huge congratulations go to them on this wonderful achievement.

For the first time in recent years, our chess team has reached the finals of the National School Chess Championships with the finals taking place towards the end of April. We are sending the team all our best wishes for their continued success.

This year, 30 Year 13 students (**a record number**) have been offered places at Oxford or Cambridge. We had one student apply to read veterinary science and they are holding several offers, again. Our 19 students who are applying for medicine are already holding 31 offers between them, with 29 decisions yet to be received. As fewer than a third of students who apply to medicine nationally would receive an offer, these are very impressive numbers. We have students applying to study 508 courses at 104 different universities, studying everything from Accountancy to Virology to Festival Production to Fashion Pattern Cutting. We wish all of our Year 11s and 13s luck and calmness as they face their public exams. We know how hard both they and their teachers have worked and we hope that they all do as well as they hope and deserve.

Whilst our Ofsted inspection now seems a long way away, the staff were delighted, at the end of term, to be treated to a reception hosted by the Brewers, at Brewers' Hall, to celebrate the school's amazing achievement. We were also touched by McMullen's who bottled an absolutely delicious 'Outstanding Ale' for us all to mark the occasion.

We look forward to having lots to celebrate together in the future.

Until then, wishing you all a restful Easter weekend.

Hannah Nemko
Headteacher



Online Safety Tip

Last year, an Ofcom report into children's media usage and online activities showed that 98% of 11-18 year olds use their mobile phones to go online. The most popular online activity engaged in was accessing some form of social media, be it TikTok, Instagram, or Snapchat. When used responsibly, social media can help young people stay connected to their peers. However, social media used irresponsibly can put young people at risk.

Therefore, the UK Safer Internet Centre has produced a guide for parents on the most popular social media apps and how to use them safely: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides>

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNORS

As Chairman and on behalf of the Board of Governors and the School's Trustee, the Worshipful Company of Brewers, I wanted to share how proud we are of the school's impressive performance during the recent Ofsted inspection.

As a Full Governing Body, we meet three times a year with the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team of the school. Additionally, we hold fifteen Committee meetings (on finance, facilities, curriculum, personnel and admissions) over the year. Many of us have further linked responsibilities for key strategic programmes in the school, such as Safeguarding, Progress, Standards, Careers, Teaching and Learning, to mention but a few. We meet with many teachers and students and review progress during our various meetings and we also try to attend as many as possible of the excellent concerts, plays and school events that our young people produce and perform.

I know, I speak for all Governors when I say that we have been consistently impressed by the way the school is led; by the commitment and professionalism of all our teaching and support staff; and the astonishing appetite to achieve Excellence in Everything, that our young people display.

Whilst the Ofsted Inspection itself can only ever be a "point in time" assessment, we are absolutely certain that the outcome rather reflects many months and years of doing the right thing, in the right way, consistently over time.

We extend our congratulations to the staff and the students of this remarkable school. Dame Alice Owen would be incredibly proud of what they have all achieved.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Haigh
Chair of Governors

**UPCOMING EVENTS:****50th Anniversary Ball, Saturday, 20th April 2024****OwensFest, Sunday, 30th June 2024****EMPLOYER MATCH FUNDING SCHEMES**

£10,000 of funds raised last year were from employer donations / matched funding schemes received from corporate employers. Please give this careful thought - if you work for an applicable employer, this can be a vital part of the OSA fund raising effort. We would love to hear from you and can communicate with your employer to understand their 'rules' to become involved.

Completing the form [here](#) can add you to our database. Further information and useful documents can be accessed through this:

[Match funding email to employer.docx - Google Drive](#)

[Match funding FAQ.docx - Google Drive](#)

**EASYFUNDRAISING ONLINE SHOPPING**

Your online shopping can easily raise OSA with funds, by accessing over 8,000 brands. It is simple with the App and is a really easy way to raise funds doing the shopping you do anyway. We have raised £19,325 since the beginning, with £935.35 on the recent Donation Day. Thank you to everyone who is already using this! [OSA - Owens School Association Fundraising | Easyfundraising](#)

NEARLY NEW UNIFORMS

Thank you for using the nearly new uniform sale - the Spring Sale raised £553! We hope you found the **JumbleBee** link in the WhatsApp group messages easy to access and use.

We'll notify you of the next one. If you would like to help, please email uniform@theosa.org.uk.

The OWEN'S SCHOOL ASSOCIATION ('OSA') NEEDS YOU... to volunteer, if you can find a little time, to support your Dame Alice Owen's School and pupils in whatever way you can, including:

- fundraising activities and events, from quizzes, the Summer Fete and Cheese & Wine Evening for new parents, to funding the purchase of much-needed equipment;
- refreshments for **over 40 events a year**, including plays, concerts, carols and parents' evenings, and
- opportunities for parents to meet and get involved in the school community.

OSA Committee Meetings: Please come and join in – everyone is welcome. We meet on the **first Monday of the month in term-time, at 7:30pm**, in the Old Library, above Reception in school. The next meeting will be on Monday, 15th April.

Visit the OSA website – www.theosa.org.uk – for comments, suggestions and offers of help.

OSA Easy Fund Raising: shopping online via the Easy Fund Raising website is a great way to make money for the school without any extra cost (or time) to you. Over 4,300 shops and sites donate to the OSA for FREE when you use **easyfundraising** to shop with them. These donations really help us and all you have to do is use **easyfundraising** when you're ordering the things you're buying anyway. See below:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/owensschoolassociation/?utm_campaign=raisemore&utm_medium=email&utm_content=rm-c20

OSA Match Funding: Are you an Owen's parent who works for a blue-chip or multinational company? You may be! Many companies offer a Match Funding scheme as a perk for employees who volunteer their time for charities like the Owen's School Association. We would love to hear from you! Please contact Keily and Simon at matchfunding@theosa.org.uk.

OSA Nearly New Uniform: Please remember to recycle and donate school uniform items (and support the school's environmental sustainability efforts at the same time). Containers labelled '*OSA Nearly New Uniform*' are located through the main Reception doors, on the right-hand side walkway. Recycling of clothing helps families save costs, gives the school additional source of funding and demonstrates environmental conscientiousness. If you would like to help, please email uniform@theosa.org.uk.

OSA Refreshments: Have you been to school events, enjoyed refreshments in the intervals and wondered who provided it? That's right – the OSA serves the school community in this humble way. Kindly consider to join in, put your name on the rota, then pick any upcoming event and share your time and smile. It **doesn't** have to be much time; it could be as little as half an hour... of course, you may enjoy it so much that you'll ask to stay longer. Please email refreshments@theosa.org.uk.

OSA's '200 Club': The OSA operates a Lottery Style 200 Club with a £50 and a £25 prize draw every month, and an extra draw in December. Annual membership is £24 per number. For further details, please contact Alan at 200club@theOSA.org.uk.

OSA's Instagram: To keep up to date with all OSA events and fundraising schemes, please follow the OSA's Instagram account using this QR code.

There we will post links to ticketed events and the Online Nearly New Uniform Shop.



SCHOOL LIFE AND BEYOND

Peer Mentoring at Owen's

Around 50 Year 12 and Y7 students are regularly meeting up within our Peer Mentoring scheme. It is great to see them out and about, chatting and laughing as they share common experiences and discuss ideas and solutions.

I asked some of the Y7 students **'What is the most important thing for you about having a mentor?'**

"Enjoyable and interesting to hear what the mentor does and the things he asks me. I can relax and just go on a walk with my mentor. It's calm and stress-relieving!"

"I like how you can just talk about anything, whether it is positive or negative. I also like how your peer mentor understands."

"I'm really enjoying my peer mentoring sessions because I have someone to talk to about my week. If ever I am excited about doing something, I tell my mentor. When I'm worried about something I tell my mentor. It is nice to talk to someone who has experienced being in Year 7 at Owen's."

"Talking about the things that have been going on and knowing you are being listened to."

"Interacting with someone that you can talk to about anything. It all is natural and friendly."

"Talking about absolutely anything and it is a very natural friendly experience."

"Being able to share things with her that would be weighing me down or can't really trust with anyone else."

"Having someone to talk to whether about schoolwork or not."

"Giving me helpful tips and tricks for not only what is happening now, but what may worry me in the future. Also, she is really friendly and funny and I always look forward our talks - we hopefully can remain friends."

Thank you to all our volunteer Y12 mentors!

Mrs Wheatley, Mental Health Lead



The Advanced Learning Partnership

Earlier this term, Jonathan Robinson and The Advanced Learning Partnership (ALP) attended IncludEd, a conference run by the Alban TSH, which focused on the growing challenges every teacher faces in the classroom with the theme of inclusive teaching. Jonathan ran a workshop on the day which was well attended, looking at the role of AI in supporting SEN students.

Following the popularity of this workshop, Jonathan also held a CPD session on 'Using AI Tools to Support Teaching & Learning', which looked at how AI can be used by secondary school teachers to enhance teaching and learning, support workload reduction, and challenge students to think more. The session was attended by 10 external delegates and the feedback has been excellent.



Owen's in BootStRaP: Boosting Societal Adaptation and Mental Health in a Rapidly Digitalizing, Post-Pandemic Europe

Over the weekend two Year 7 students joined 24 young ambassadors and 10 teacher ambassadors from 8 other countries across Europe at the BootStRaP ambassador launch at Missenden Abbey. Students from around Europe put their heads together to develop the BootStRaP app and create a design for the Youth Hub, which our students' team won! It was an extraordinary weekend, which kicked off this amazing opportunity to be co-researchers in the Europe-wide project. Led by world leading researchers from the University of Hertfordshire, funded by the EU, the project is the largest project to date that aims to identify individual risk and resilience to problematic use of the internet.

Safa H: 'I signed up for this project because I saw an amazing opportunity to support the mental health of young people and create an app that will do so. When we first arrived at the Bootcamp, I remember thinking 'OK, this looks a bit too fancy, am I meant to be here?'. But in all honesty, this weekend was incredible and I have learnt so much during the sessions. I am also proud of myself as my ideas have been a great input to the project and the youth hub website, which our team won! We met lots of different people from all over Europe and they (student ambassadors and researchers) are all so kind and they have been brilliant during this weekend. I really look forward to continuing being an ambassador for BootStRaP in the future.'

Anya A: 'I was reading through my emails one day when I saw the BootStRaP project application. As soon as I read it, I knew it would be perfect for me as I used to have an internet addiction and I wanted to help other people to get over theirs. When I wrote the application I didn't think much of it, but looking back I am so happy I applied. The trip was 2 nights long but felt much shorter. During the trip, we designed an app and attended meetings to help design it. Our app design won, so our design is going to be incorporated into the app. I loved how respectful all the adults were to us, they really listened and took our ideas on board. My favourite part was the fact that we had machines that made hot chocolates near us so I got to have hot chocolate in almost every meeting! Overall, it was an amazing experience and I am very excited to continue making contributions to the project.'

Social Action Captains meet Baroness Larence at the House of Commons

On the 30th January 2024, Clerkenwell Social Action Captains had the rare opportunity to visit the House of Commons in London. It was such an impressive place! While on tour of the House of Commons, we didn't only get to marvel the stunning architecture but also to learn a great deal about the political history of the United Kingdom.

The tour followed by the meeting with Baroness Lawrence (mother of Stephen Lawrence) who runs the Stephen Lawrence foundation for which Clerkenwell raised £2000! We were even lucky enough to have exclusive access to witness the Question Time in action in the House of Lords. This was in the chambers and was quite exciting as politicians were debating controversial current affairs.



Overall, it was an insightful experience which sparked our curiosity about how the government works. Besides, it was inspiring to hear Baroness Lawrence share with us her story.

Aayushi, Y10

What an Adventure!

Throughout primary school, I was always daydreaming about things; daydreaming about home, things happening in school, songs stuck in my head, hypothetical situations. But above all, I was always daydreaming of adventures and fantasy stories. Little adventures and stories were constantly playing in my head, and one day when I was about 10, I decided to turn one of the adventures in my head into something more real. I knew that these fantasies, no matter how much I wanted them to, wouldn't actually become real, but I knew that, when I read a book, it felt like the adventures inside them were actually real.

I then decided to write a book of my own, on an adventure that I had created, so that me and other people could enjoy it. One year later, after a lot of writing, many illustrations, editing and proofreading, my book has been released.

I hope everyone who has a copy can finally enjoy one of the adventures that has been running through my mind for so long now. I hope this inspires any of the readers like me, the dreamers, I like to call them, that our adventures don't have to hide in our minds and they deserve to be looked after and brought to life. So, to all the young dreamers out there, remember: your stories are not just whispers in the wind, they are the echoes of your future, waiting to be penned and shared with the world.

Anya, Y7



Active Youth

On Thursday, 25th January, Ava Mohammad Aghaei (Y11) took part in an event for Holocaust Memorial Day arranged by Welwyn Hatfield Council. Ava, who is the Vice Chair of the Welwyn Hatfield Youth Council, read a touching poem during the memorial.

Photo: Ava, the Vice Lord-Lieutenant Captain, Anthony Chapman, Welwyn Hatfield Mayor, Pankit Shah.



Celebrate with Ellen!

I've been taking LAMDA exams for about eight years, both in acting and devising, but most recently in verse and prose. Finally, last December, I took my final exam — grade 8 — and was thrilled to get a distinction.

I really enjoyed the chance to get to know some beautiful pieces of literature; academically speaking, it was also

brilliant to study Shakespeare's sonnets in depth, especially as I take English Literature at A-level. I have also improved my public speaking skills as well as my confidence, both of which I used to struggle with. Overall, I have really enjoyed the experience and have gained a lot from it.

Ellen M, Y12

CHESS NEWS

Chess continues to make headlines at DAOS with our students reaching their first ever final. On the 26th of February, Owen's team made up by Rock Y, Taohai K, James C and Uthmaan K entered a regional heat of the Junior Chess Team Challenge, that is open to Y8 and below.



They comprehensively beat St. Albans School and Beaumont School in a round robin system and now have the chance for glory in the National Final that takes place on the 20th April at King Edward VI Grammar School. Alas our captain Rock Y can't make it but we hope the other members of the team can rise to the occasion.

On a more disappointing note, we are now out of the ECF Schools Chess Championship having been beaten by Habs Boys A Team. Although the score sounds like a thrashing ($5\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$), it was actually much more competitive than that seems; and the boys put in a great effort. Well done to Rock, Stephen G, Taohai, James, Uthman and Tudor A for representing!



Our online form continues to be exceptional with our A Team winning the National Online Schools Chess League Division One a number of times this time, with the B Team also performing well and being promoted into the top league. The girls team have also carried on performing well in the 'She Plays To Win' online tournament, finishing 8th in the most recent event. Well done to Rachel G and Olivia G for their involvement in that. We hope to get more involved so that we can win it!

The OSA were also kind enough to fund 4 new chess clocks this year and they have been used for the Inter-House Chess Tournaments this term. So far, we have had the Y8 competition that was won by Hermitage and the Y10 competition that was won by Isledon. Next up is the Y7 event!

LET'S PLAY CHESS!

Mr Simpson, Director of Chess

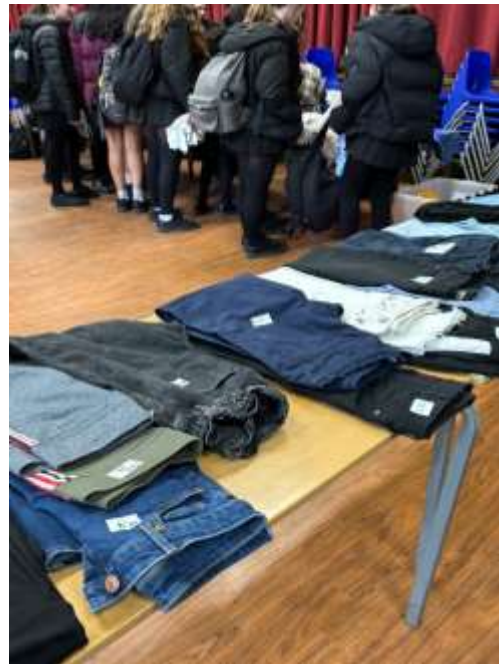
ECO COMMITTEE

Fast Fashion

Fast fashion has devastating impact on our environment. In order to spread awareness and help reduce these effects, the Eco Committee held its second sustainable fashion swap on Friday, the 15th of March, as part of our challenge of the month. In the weeks leading up to the event, the Eco committee collected over 214 clothing donations from students. All those who donated items received tickets which they could exchange for different clothes at the fashion fair.

This was a huge success as students were able to get new clothes without spending money or supporting unsustainable fashion brands. Any unclaimed clothes were then offered to students that didn't make any donations or given to the textiles department.

The Eco committee would like to thank all its participants in helping to combat fast fashion.

***Composed Upon Westminster Bridge***

By William Wordsworth

*Earth has not anything to show more fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty;
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

LIBRARY

The Library Update

The daffodils are blooming outside the library windows, the ducks are quacking by the lake, and inside the library, we have been busy as usual!

We have continued to welcome English classes in years 7, 8 and 9 for library lessons. This term we have been marking a series of special events with our library lesson themes: LGBTQ+ History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, Children's Mental Health Week and International Women's Day with themed displays, selected texts for class reading and a range of oral, written and creative activities - as well as always making time for free choice book borrowing and a period of sustained silent reading for everyone. Meanwhile, we celebrated World Book Day by suspending the normal routine and instead running a 'book speed dating' session for every group, with students 'meeting' books from different genres, noting down their first impressions, what they thought after some 'deeper conversation' and finally deciding whether they wanted to take their book home for a 'second date'...

The non-fiction library has been well-used for sixth-form private study, while at breaktime and lunchtimes, both rooms are regularly filling up with students from all years working hard on their homework and revision, as well as enjoying some relaxing book browsing and reading time. We are now able to offer Chromebooks to borrow directly from the library office, giving more students the opportunity to carry out research or access Google Classroom tasks whilst working in the library.

Our team of student librarians and Duke of Edinburgh's Award helpers has continued to grow. Their assistance is much appreciated by the library staff. This term, alongside routine tasks at the library desk, students have also learned to mend books and help to process new stock, and have also started helping the librarian with the huge task of reviewing our Young Adult fiction section.

Book Club has been meeting weekly on Wednesday breaktime. This term, we have enjoyed a 'Bring Your Own Book' reading session, a 'Warrior Cats' series themed week, creating 'book hedgehogs' with old withdrawn library books, book quizzes and, for the first time ever, we have entered a team in a competitive event - an online heat for the National Literacy Trust National Reading Champions Quiz - see the separate report below.

In the background, the library staff have been working hard on 'weeding' and reorganising the non-fiction library. Next term, in addition to the current stock, students will be able to choose from a wide range of new non-fiction books, thanks to the generous support of the OSA... watch this space for more details of some lovely new books soon.

Dr H James, Librarian

Student Report: National Literacy Trust National Reading Champions Quiz

In early March, five members of Book club formed the Dame Alice Owen's team (one of us was a reserve) for the cross-regional heat of the Nation Reading Champions Book Quiz. We spent an exciting morning answering questions about a huge range of different books, from classics to picture books. There were twenty seven schools competing, most of them secondary schools. Although we did not win, we thoroughly enjoyed the experience and will be coming back next year well prepared.

Charlotte, Y7

CAREERS

Alumni Careers Talks: National Careers Week took place in early March, so with delight and gratitude we welcomed back a host of DAOS alumni to offer career talks to our current students in the Sixth Form block. Every talk was inspiring, well thought out and honest, delivering useful and practical information to young people who are often confused about career options and the choices that lie ahead of them. Personal experience and advice are so important and the students really appreciate hearing real life stories from our alumni community.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who came into school and dedicated an afternoon of their time to help. Most of the alumni speakers said they are happy to be contacted if further advice is needed. If you would like information relating to a particular speaker, or would like to read the presentation slides, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Ms Stein.



Thank you again to the following:

Mike Thain, Defence Science, Ministry of Defence; Steve White, Animator, Lola Post; Zoe Johnson, Senior Policy Advisor, HM Treasury; Stavros Orfanos, Clinical Psychologist; Clare Stuart Adams, IT Consultant, BUPA; Jasmine Barron, Tailor, Angels Costumes; Gavin Withers, Head of Talent Acquisition, Canada Life; Dan Latham, Teacher; Nathan Rudolf, KC & Judge; Graham Bailey, Advertising & Marketing, GB Marketing; Imogen Craven, Charity Sector; Charlotte Marshal, Insurance, Lloyd's of London.

Careers Assemblies: Several career related assemblies were held this term for students throughout the school to learn more about the education and apprenticeship opportunities available to them after GCSE and 6th form. Year 8 and 9 learnt about apprenticeship opportunities after Year 11 and Year 13; Year 11 were addressed by Oaklands Further Education College about their post 16 offering and Year 10 attended an assembly with Capital City Group focusing on their post 16 courses and apprenticeships.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

F1 in Schools

F1 in Schools is an initiative designed to encourage students of both primary and secondary age to take part in a range of activities and competitions, enabling them to develop crucial skills, spanning from communication and teamwork to more advanced skills such as project management and computer aided design (CAD). These competitions range from regional events to global ones for the best teams, encouraging ambition and determination.

On the 14th December, three teams from Year 9 took part in the regional finals, competing in the Development Class, the second-highest level of competition for secondary school students. Although none of them qualified for the national finals, (missing out by just 1 or 2 spots) the teams did extremely well, facing other teams from different schools, some of which had much older students! Overall, out of 12 teams, they came 8th, 5th and 4th, and my team, Helion Racing (shown below) even won the 'Best Engineered Car' award!



The event took place at Harlow College and saw a wide variety of activities take place, each of which had to be meticulously planned for in the build-up to the competition. Formal roles within teams were assigned, with each member responsible for overseeing a different area. Some of the main tasks are listed below:

- Designing and manufacturing a model F1 car using Fusion 360 to race.
- Working with sponsors in order to obtain funding and endorsement.
- Project management to ensure that everything is running smoothly and on time.
- Building a brand identity, including a logo, promotional material (team hoodies, keyrings, etc), and a pit display.
- Budgeting and accounting to ensure that money is spent with maximum efficiency.
- Effective marketing to raise awareness and interest.

Lots of dedication was put into this, with many lunchtimes used to work on the different elements. However, the most important thing by far was the skills that we learnt, as these are invaluable and extremely important for navigating the world that we live in.

My favourite part about the competition was getting to work with my team, as we all collaboratively produced some amazing things and each member had something unique and different to bring. The fact that we were able to communicate effectively allowed us to understand each person's specific tasks and measure our progress as a whole, ensuring that everything was as streamlined as possible.

I would like to say a special thank you to Mr Stensel and the rest of the DT department, as without their efforts, and giving up their own time to help us with the competition, we wouldn't have been able to do so well. I would highly recommend this to any interested students - whether Year 7 or 13 - as I can guarantee that you will never get an opportunity like this one.

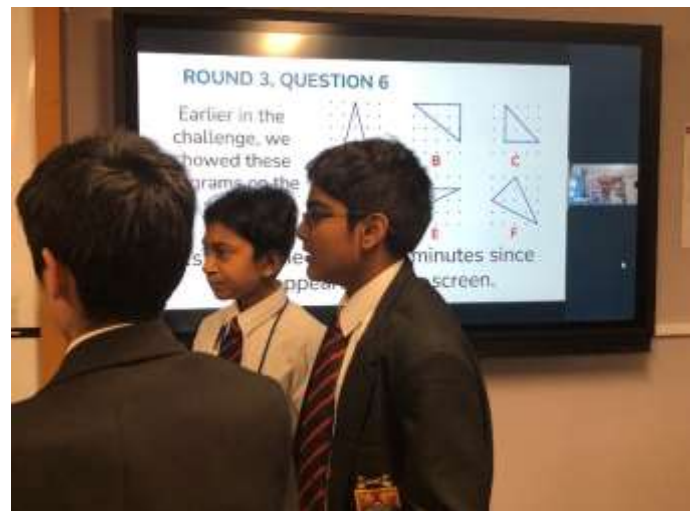
Ammiel G, Y9

MATHS

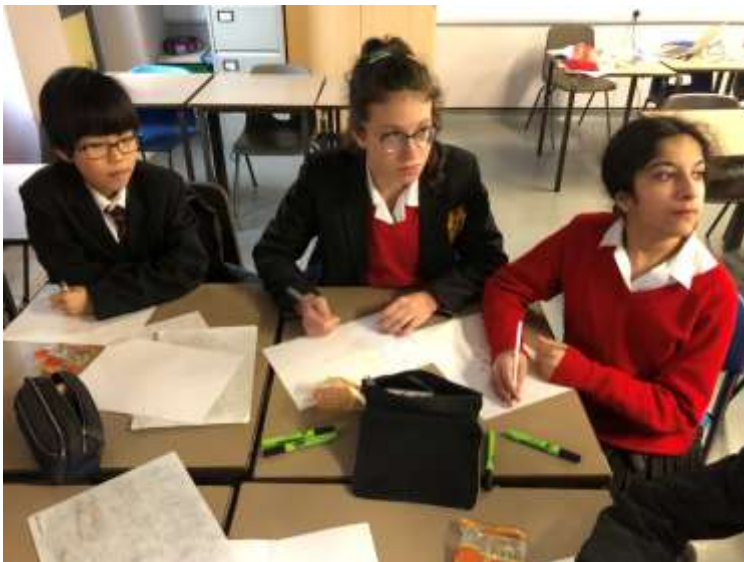
Year 7 Team Maths Competition

We are the Year 7 students who took part in *The Year 7 Team Mathematics Competition*. We were very honoured to be chosen for this competition and we are very happy with our scores. In the Heat (the round before the finals, in which both of Dame Alice Owen's Year 7 teams have been invited to), Team Green gained the top spot with an impressive score of 186 points, while Team Brown also performed incredibly well, securing third place with an excellent score of 170 points. We all think that it was a great opportunity and we were proud to represent our school in the challenge. We are all looking forward to showcasing our school's strengths in the finals.

During the Heat, we were in two teams – Team Brown and Team Green. In Team Brown there was Keyaan, Kush, Aarush and Jayden. On the other team (Team Green) was Aaryasky, Charlene, Noah and Anson.



There were four rounds in this Heat, which included general questions (Round 1), memorising a mathematical poster (Round 2), estimation (Round 3) and finally another round of general questions (Round 4).



The finals will be a face-to-face event and will be held at *The Hertfordshire Development Centre* in Stevenage. This time, there will be 5 rounds. The first round will be General Maths Questions. This will be followed by the next 4 rounds: Memory; Problems and Puzzles; Estimation and then another round of General Maths Questions.

The Year 7 Finals will take place on Thursday, the 25th April, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. The overall winners of this challenge will receive a trophy.

DAOS Team Maths Competition

On Tuesday, 12th March, 130 Pupils took part in the annual Team Maths Competition in the front dining room of the school. 40 Students from year 8 and 40 from year 9 took part. There were 20 teams of 4 students: 2 year 8's and 2 year 9's. The afternoon event over periods 4 and 5 consisted of 4 rounds of Maths problems. The teams were ably assisted by 50 sixth formers who helped administer the competition.

The Competition consisted of 4 rounds: Cross number, Group round, Mini-relay and Relay. The final rounds saw pupils running back and forth in a desperate attempt to complete all 14 questions in the allotted time. Mr Fry, thanked all those involved for a great afternoon and a really close competition. The winners receiving Amazon vouchers were as follows (1st Team – 20, 2nd Team – 17, 3rd Team – 16: 20. Shanti B, Lily C, Hannah J and Bryan X; 17. Nico S, Adaugo N, Ayana B and Tom B; 16. Noura P, Anasuya S, Anya D and Kushal E.



Maths Challenge

Earlier this term 292 pupils from years 9, 10 and 11 sat the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. Of these we achieved 53 Gold medals, 83 Silver medals and 86 Bronze Medals. We had 37 students invited to sit the follow on rounds this year – congratulations to them all! Special congratulations go to Adam S (Y9), who achieved best in year with 109 points and to Andreas E (Y10) and Jonah R (Y11) who achieved joint Best in School with an amazing 116 points. All three were invited to sit the Olympiads.

The following students were invited to sit the follow up rounds which take place this month:

Grey Kangaroo: Viaan A, Oliver A, Sreehari A, Ammiel G, Hannah J, Ruhani K, Alex B, Joseph H, Dillon H, Sienna J, Harrunah S, Bryan X and Emilia P

Pink Kangaroo: Hayden C, Andrew F, Archie I, Vishnu P, Ben P, Hannah S, Jacob S, Vanshika R, Emmanuel A, Jafar A, Seth B, Jack B, Evie C, Emma D, Ria D, Jack F, Samuel G, Conrad G, Zackaryaa I, Sally J, Melissa K, Anissa M, Lucia M, Niamh M, Sophie S and Yitong Y

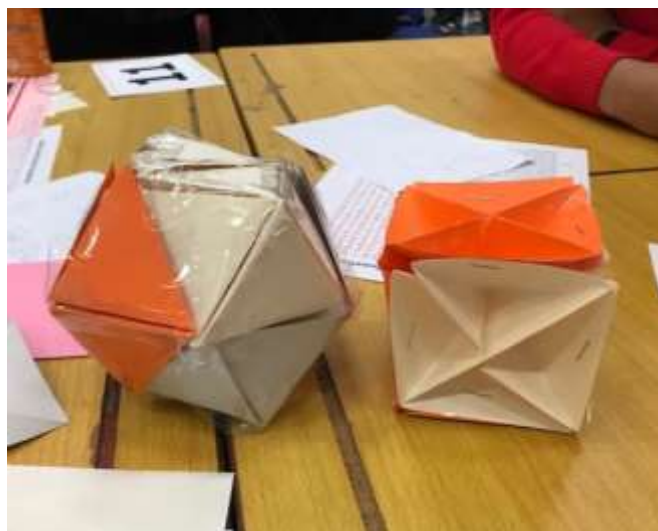
Olympiad: Akshay M (Y10) and Jamie L (Y11)

We eagerly await their results!

Maths Feast

Students Vanshika, Kian, Andreas and Maya attended the Maths Feast competition run by the AMSP for Year 10 students, participating in interactive, live maths and logic puzzles over the course of four rounds.

Round 1 was general maths based around different game shows. Round 2 was a cross-number with maths equations for clues. They came in the top three teams for this round. Round 3 was based around another universe where everyone wore different combinations of hats and had to obey certain rules. They came in the top three teams for this round as well.



Finally, round 4 was a very practical round where the students had to create models using origami skills and answer questions about the properties of these models. It was quite difficult, but they managed to produce excellent outputs.

Their collaboration, especially in the last round, earned them a trophy for the best teamwork. Overall, it was a spectacular afternoon!

Vanshika, Kian, Andreas and Maya, Y10

Maths Day in Cambridge

On Tuesday, 30th January, a number of girls from Year 11 visited St John's College, Cambridge University, to participate in Maths Day. We were greeted by one of the Director of Studies in Maths, Dr Matthias Dörrzapf, who immediately engaged us with his fascinating session on the power of maths, conserved quantities and symmetries. Shortly after the first talk, a current undergraduate led us on a tour of the college grounds, which included the college library, accommodation blocks and the magnificent chapel. This was also an opportunity to ask questions about life at the University, which we found extremely useful and informative.





After our buffet lunch, we took part in a further maths taster session, this time led by Jack Smith, the other Director of Studies at the College. The focus of this lecture was geometry, and how we can link this topic to numbers. This included discussing proofs of many different things relating to geometry – for example, proving that there are only a limited number of regular solids. Overall, these talks gave us an insight into what it would be like to study maths at degree level and spurred us to apply the new knowledge back in our lessons at Owen's.

On behalf of all the students that attended this Maths Day, we would like to say a huge thank you to the maths department for giving us this opportunity, and to Mrs Brady and Mr Simpson for taking us to the event!



MODERN LANGUAGES

German Students Shine Brightly in a Term Full of Excitement!

Guten Tag, dear readers! As we bid auf Wiedersehen to another eventful term, it's time to reflect on the whirlwind of activities that swept through our German department. From uproarious laughter to awe-inspiring creativity, our German students have truly outdone themselves this term, leaving an indelible mark on our school community.



In February, the spirit of Karneval descended upon us, and what better way to celebrate than with a riotous costume competition! Fifty-one of our enthusiastic German students threw themselves into the fray, armed with nothing but their wit and imagination. The challenge? To embody the essence of German compound nouns through their costumes, and oh boy, did they deliver! Each group ingeniously brought these linguistic marvels to life, eliciting laughter and applause from all corners.

The overall winners were Toby S and Max S in Y7 with their word 'Kühlschrank' (= fridge), and Kayra G, George B, Patrick S, Lucas BL, and Chris G in Y11 with 'Lieblingsfußballmannschaft' (= favourite football team).

The fun didn't stop there! Our budding artists showcased their talents in the German Abstract Art competition, and the results were nothing short of spectacular. The MFL corridor now boasts a vibrant display, a testament to the boundless creativity of our students. It's truly a sight to behold!

The prize winners all captured the essence of abstraction and created works that were incredibly evocative of the German Language. The winners were Phoebe N and Eesa L in Y7, Michelle X in Y8 and Brian X and Haruna S in Y9.



In the midst of all this excitement, our upper school students embarked on an unforgettable journey to Munich organised by Frau Möller with the support of Mr Robinson and Mr Simpson. From delving into the pages of history at Dachau Concentration Camp to experiencing the pulsating energy of Fasnacht (carnival) on the main square, they immersed themselves in the rich tapestry of German culture that the city has to offer. The BMW Museum and Allianz Stadium provided the perfect blend of heritage and modernity, leaving our students inspired and awestruck, not to mention very excited.

We were so impressed by the students' level of maturity, engagement, willingness to practise their German skills, and support for each other throughout the trip.



And let's not forget our Sixth Formers, who were also treated to a thrilling murder mystery dinner party. Against the backdrop of suspense and intrigue, they unleashed their linguistic prowess, engaging in spirited conversations *auf Deutsch* as they strove to solve a fictional murder over pizzas and other snacks. Dressed to the nines, they revelled in the opportunity to unwind and connect with one another outside the classroom walls. For the Y13 it was a particularly poignant occasion, as it marks the culmination of Owen's years of German study.



As we reflect on these moments of joy and camaraderie, we're reminded of the transformative power of language and culture. Through these experiences, our students have not only honed their linguistic skills but also forged lifelong memories and friendships.

So, here's to our German students, whose boundless enthusiasm and creativity continue to inspire us all. As we bid farewell to this term, let us carry forth the spirit of Karneval and the joy of discovery, ready to embrace the adventures that await us in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr Robinson

Taking Languages Further

Mr Robinson has continued to offer students language opportunities beyond the curriculum. His popular Linguistics Club has now morphed into the Conlangs Club and familiar faces have been joined by some new students to learn about language construction and creation for fictional worlds. We looked at renowned conlangs such as Tolkien's Quenya and Vanyarin, Dothraki from The Game of Thrones, and Klingon from Star Trek to mention a few. Students were taught the steps needed to create a conlang from scratch. Now they are busily beaver away on developing their proto-conlangs, using their linguistic skills and boundless creativity and imagination.

Furthermore, Mr Robinson has set up a British Sign Language (BSL) Club for students in Year 7-9 who are following a digital course leading to a level 1 qualification in BSL that has been very kindly funded by the OSA. Never one to shy away from a new language, Mr Robinson is also striving to learn BSL with the students. Students have the opportunity to meet up every two to three weeks to practise their signing at lunchtime with Mr Robinson. Many thanks must also go to Mrs Nicolaou who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to set up the course and monitor students' progress.



MUSIC

Soul Band Evening

The Spring Term kicked off in style at the DAOS Soul Band Evening held on Thursday, 1st February.

Soul Band 2 were amazing from their signature opener 'Gimme Some Lovin', to their finishing number, 'Shut Up and Dance' they performed to a 'soul-ed out' (thank you Mr Crossley!) audience with great energy and professionalism. They performed a range of pieces from soul classics such as Jackie Wilson's 'Higher and Higher' and 'I Heard it through the Grapevine', as well as more modern soul numbers like Duffy's 'Mercy'. Although the whole band were fantastic, a special mention is always due to our lead singers: Anaya, Sethuni, Hannah, Mya and Arya. Roll on 2025!



Soul Band 1 kicked off their set with Sethuni's impressive vocals on Tina Turner's Proud Mary, before the backing vocals up on the balcony took the audience by surprise! With one classic song after the other, and performing hits from Britney Spears, Earth Wind and Fire and Destiny's Child, Soul Band 1 had the crowd singing and dancing and could easily be mistaken for professionals! The band have been especially united in rehearsals this year and it was extremely apparent how much fun they were all having.



The evening finished with Soul Band 1 & 2 joining forces on stage to perform 'Celebration', even enticing appreciative staff & parents to 'Get Up and Dance' in the aisles – a fantastic and fun way to finish a fabulous evening.

Our appreciation and thanks to Mr Crossley, Mr Page & Ms Sutherland who set the tone and direct the students so brilliantly every week at their rehearsals and for giving the students the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of a delighted audience. Thank you also to the DAOS Tech Crew for making them sound and look even better!

The South East Schools' Chamber Music Competition

An array of Owen's chamber musicians gathered at Harrow School on the final Sunday of half term to take part in the first round of the South East Schools Chamber Music Competition. Each group's performance on stage was followed immediately by a coaching session from the competition's tutor, professional violinist and professor at the Royal Academy of Music, Nicole Wilson. With two groups in the Junior Section performing works by Beethoven and Schubert, two groups in the Intermediate Section performing Bartok and Mozart and one Senior group performing Tchaikovsky, the morning displayed Owen's musicians in the full richness and range of their chamber music making. The coach worked with them on aspects such as matching articulation and phrasing between players, balancing the instruments, especially challenging in a mixed woodwind quintet, and how to ensure the audience really gets the operatic-style drama of the music.



We were delighted when, following this day, two groups, in the Junior and Senior categories, were selected to perform in the finals concert at St George's, Hanover Square, London in March.

Thank-you to Ms Bamber and Mr Widden for accompanying the trip and also to Ms Redshaw for her work with the musicians.





Chamber Concert

Our first Chamber Concert of the Spring Term featured an array of accomplished musicians including **Les Vents Wind Quintet**, **Spiritus Wind Quintet**, and several of our **string chamber ensembles** performing pieces by Mendelssohn, Schubert, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky.

Soloists taking part included Year 13 Pianist, George who gave two fabulous performances including the beautiful *Reverie* by Debussy, Year 12 Clio on Viola performing the 3rd movement from Rebecca Clarke's Viola Sonata and on Cello, Atticus who played Hungarian Rhapsody by Popper.

A highlight of the evening was the duet and performance of Mendelssohn's *Konzertstück* no. 2 by the Y11 and Y13 Clarinet team, Eloise and Hassan. We're very proud at Owen's to have two superb wind quintets and both of these performed in this concert, opening the first and second halves.

We were also treated to a performance of the finale of Schubert's Trout Quintet given by a self-directed KS3 group of Y9 and Y8 students. The concert was brought to a rousing and exciting end by the Year 12 String Sextet performing Tchaikovsky's Invigorating *Souvenir de Florence*.

Our thanks to Ms Redshaw, Mr Crossley and Mr Widden for their inspiring work with the groups!





Large Ensembles Concert

The EGH was home to an amazing evening of Orchestral music as DAOS presented 'Concertos and More' featuring an incredible range of repertoire and accomplished performances from the DAOS Chamber and Symphony Orchestras.

The first half began with the **Chamber Orchestra** performing Haydn's Concerto in E flat major with a tremendous solo from Y13 Jasmine on Trumpet. We were then treated to a rousing and accomplished performance of Georges Bizet's *Carmen Suite* by **Senior Strings**, joined by **The Senior Percussion Ensemble** which finished with the audience taking to their feet in recognition of our young musicians' talent and hard work. Thanks must go to Conductor Mr Widden and Ms McCrystal who had both been rehearsing the piece with the students in the weeks leading up to the concert.

The first half concluded with the DAOS **Symphony Orchestra** (conducted by Ms Bamber), joined by the orchestra's Y13 principal Horn, Jess, for a performance of Franz Strauss' Horn Concerto that demonstrated splendidly both the lyrical qualities and the virtuosic capabilities of the French horn.



The second half was opened by the Symphony Orchestra again, as another Y13 student, Rufus, gave a scintillating performance of the first movement of Schumann's lyrical and virtuoso piano concerto.

The concert concluded with the full forces of DAOS Symphony Orchestra on stage in a thrilling performance of Holst's *Jupiter* from *the Planets*.

The concert was also an opportunity to begin to say a very fond "farewell" and "thank you" to all of our wonderful year 13 musicians as they prepare for their next chapter as they move toward the summer exams and life after Owen's. They are a vibrant force at the very heart of the Owen's musical community, leading, supporting, and innovating and regularly performing and participating in every possible role in concerts and across the full range of performances at DAOS. We dearly hope they continue to love their music-making in wherever life takes them next.



South East Schools Chamber Music Competition – finals concert

Over the last few years, DAOS chamber groups have enjoyed much success at the South East Schools Chamber Music Competition. Ensembles from trios to octets have had masterclasses from eminent professional musicians, and have come away with high praise and performances at St John's Smith Square and St George's Hanover Square. In previous years, we have won the top prizes in both the Intermediate and the Senior categories.

The standard of players from all schools has continued to rise, and this year, the playing across the board was at an incredibly high level.

DAOS had two groups competing: the **Year 9 'Trout' Quintet** (so called because it is a unique combination used by Schubert for his work of the same name: violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano), and **the Year 12 String Sextet**. The Year 9 group performed beautifully, but they were up against two virtuoso flautists who just pipped them at the post for the Junior prize.



This is the third year in a row that the current Year 12s have performed at the finals. Despite their having played out of their skins the last two years, they had not had any success. We were delighted and thrilled, therefore, when their performance of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's 'Souvenir de Florence' was given the Runner-Up prize in the Senior category, just behind an absolutely first-class performance of the Schumann Piano Quartet. We're already planning a truly mind-blowing performance for their last attempt at the top prize next year.

Our thanks to Ms Bamber and Mr Widden for accompanying the trip.

The Spring Concert

Congratulations to our young musicians for their wonderful performances at the Spring Concert held in the EGH.

Our excited and enthusiastic **Junior Ensemble** opened the concert with an enjoyable rendition of The Beatles' *When I'm 64* and finished with a really accomplished performance of *Don't Stop Believin'* by Journey. It was obvious by the applause just how much the audience enjoyed watching the young students perform – some for the first time since starting at Owen's.

Our young percussionists were on fine form with **Drumming Club** performing *Pieces of 8* which they devised and composed themselves before an energetic rendition of the famous Duke Ellington's *C-Jam Blues*. **Junior Percussion Ensemble** continued to display how much they have learnt and developed this term with a groovy & toe tapping version of *Soul Bossa Nova* by Quincy Jones.

Junior Chamber Strings took to the stage and gave a fabulous performance of Vaughan Williams' *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* Conducted brilliantly by Y12 student, Laura. They were joined by not one but two Harpists, including Y12 Kait, taking a prominent role in this unique and beautiful piece.

The **Junior Chamber Choir** gave a heartfelt and beautiful rendition of *Nightingale* but then treated the audience to a fun arrangement of Dolly Parton's *Nine to Five*. A special mention must go to Y13 Charlie Theobald who was presented with chocolates for all his hard work and commitment to accompanying the Junior Choirs.

The first half was closed by the **Junior Choir** whose set included Willy Wonka's *Pure Imagination* and a rousing performance of *Sing* by the Pentatonix, accompanied by Y12 student Philip on the piano and Y11 student Stephanie on Flute and also bass guitar.

Owen's **Second Band**, conducted by Neil Crossley provided a glittering opening to the second half of the concert with their programme including Robert Buckley's *Propulsion*.

Second Orchestra's rousing and lyrical performance of the *Lion King Medley* rounded off a wonderful evening of music-making with a packed stage!

We would like to thank the musical directors of the ensembles: Ms Bamber, Ms McChrystal, Ms Sutherland, Mr Crossley and Mrs Brady for all their hard work with the students.





Chamber Concert

The Chamber Concerts are always a wonderful opportunity for the audience to enjoy the smaller ensembles showcasing their talents and last week's Chamber Concert in the Main Hall was a wonderfully eclectic mix.

Brass Band opened the evening taking us with *Espania* and a toe tapping *Get Funky* and Senior Jazz Combo drew applause from the audience for each improvised solo in their accomplished and thrilling performance of *Spain* by Chick Corea that was marked out by the spontaneous magnetism of the collaboration between these musicians from Years 11,12 and 13.

Our vocalists were in fine voice with the **Vocal Trio** giving an energetic performance of Bernstein's *I feel Pretty* and the **Vocal Quartet** taking us back to the 1950's with an excellent rendition of *Mr Sandman* by Pat Ballard.

For the first time in many years we were delighted to be able to showcase the talents of the **DAOS Recorder Ensemble**. Directed by Catherine Wild and featuring Soloist Hassan Marzban on Descant Recorder, the ensemble performed two pieces - the 1st movement from Baston's Concerto No. 2 in C major and the lovely Tango by Brian Bonsor. Thank you to Ms Wild has been a dedicated and inspirational ensemble leader this term. The students have been working really hard in their rehearsals and enjoyed having the chance to perform in front of an appreciative audience.

Rounding off the first half, **Brass Ensemble** showed the range of lyricism and panache in their performing that included Tchaikovsky's *Chanson Triste*.



The audience were also invited to gather by the statue of Dame Alice Owen during the concert interval and listen as the **Year 11 Chamber Ensemble**, utilising the piano, performed Prokofiev's challenging *Overture on Hebrew Themes*. Special mention must go to Rufus in Y13 who stepped in at extremely short notice to accompany them on piano.

Jazz Collective performed Happy Friday, a piece composed by the students during their weekly rehearsals with Mr Crossley and demonstrating their ability to improvise, combine different instruments and try something new.

A real crowd pleaser and highlight of the evening was listening to the **Guitar Ensemble** play their version of The Eurythmics' *Sweet Dreams Are Made Of This* arranged by Mr Niesyto.

Only rehearsing together for a number of weeks, the **Flute Ensemble** were impressive in the confidence and authority of their performing of *La Cucaracha* from *Fiesta Mexicana*

Confidence and collaboration were much in evidence in the **Cello Ensemble's** performance of *Flamenco Fantastico*, directed by Y12 cellist, Dyllen.

Owen's **Barbershop Quartet** has now established itself as a running tradition that is marked out by the fact of its complete independence of any teacher involvement! Their rendition of the humorous re-working of *Old Macdonald's Farm*, compete with suitably slapstick actions accompanying the immensely accomplished singing, brought the house down!



The evening was brought to a close by the immensely accomplished **Saxophone Ensemble** whose well matched sounds and fine sense of lyricism and rhythmic lilt was a fitting end to a wonderful evening.

Congratulations to all our musicians!

Thank you to Ms Wild, Mr Crossley, Mr Kelly, Mr Hunt, Miss Smith, Ms Ashenden, Ms Makepeace-Lott and Mr Widden for all their help in making the concert possible.

Our thanks to Mrs King, the Music Administrator, for all her work enabling these events to take place.



SOCIAL SCIENCES

Visit to Draper's Hall

On the 22nd March, ten students went to 'The Raleigh Lecture' at Drapers' Hall, an annual event that focuses on business and enterprise. The theme this year was 'An Entrepreneur's Paradise?' and this is a report from Milo E, who was one of the students that attended the day.

"We went to the Drapers' Hall to see a series of lectures about how space is the future of entrepreneurship. The Master of the Company of Entrepreneurs, Mr Mark Huxley, introduced the event starting with three short talks, which showcased the real-world interaction of space and satellite technology with humanity today. Students were arranged into mixed discussion groups and moved to the discussion areas for group work reflecting on the short talks and facilitated by Freeman Entrepreneurs. This was very enlightening and informative and if there was one thing to take away from it, it's that a career involved in space doesn't need to be a rocket scientist and there are many other options."

**DAOS Economics Society**

Our economics students have been running the DAOS Economics Society over the past couple of terms. As the reins are passed over to Year 12, here is what one of the leaders, Ryan Finnegan has said about it.

"Throughout Year 13, I have thoroughly enjoyed running DAOS Economics Society. Weekly discussions and debates allowed students from various year groups to come together and collaborate to gain new understanding and expand on differing economic perspectives. Hosting presentations on current economic affairs which students found engaging was rewarding, and providing quizzes on the presentations' ideas facilitated exciting, active participation."

**GAIN INVESTMENT Challenge**

This year, five members of our Y12 took part in the annual GAIN Investment Challenge. This event aims to provide young women and non-binary students in Year 10 to 13 with a unique insight into the world of investment management and the skills needed to analyse a company. The team were (from left to right): Kait C, Vansheeka S, Alannah D, Maya T and Emily C.

Here is what Alannah and Maya had to say about taking part in the challenge:

"The task we were given was to provide a convincing and thorough stock pitch on why we should invest in Sainsbury's. Through many hours of research on the company and multiple meetings with our incredible mentor, we successfully filmed our pitch in Sainsbury's and completed our documentation. Not only was participating enjoyable, but it taught us more about the investment industry and gave us insights into the potential careers in our futures. This is why being Dame Alice Owen's representatives in this investment challenge was an honour, and regardless of the outcome we know that we have all taken away invaluable lessons."

Willow Leather Business Visit

On the 14th of March, the department were glad to welcome local entrepreneur Amber Oates from Willow Leather to run a business workshop with some of our Year 10 students. As they made leather star ornaments, Amber explained what it's like to be a small business and the highs and lows of being an entrepreneur. Look at the fantastic stars they made and do check out Willow Leather, we can highly recommend - <https://willow-leather.com/>



Bank of England Museum: Easter Holiday Fun!

Stuck for something to do this Easter break? Why not check out the Bank of England Museum and their excellent new exhibition on the future of money - <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/museum/whats-on/the-future-of-money>.

If you go on the 12th of April, you might see a friendly face there, as Mr Simpson will be there with 'Ask an Economics Teacher' session, where he tries to encourage visitors to discuss economics. He will also (no doubt) be plugging the economics book he has written with his podcast co-host Pete. It's called 'The Economic Problem' and is a beginner's guide to economics. It costs £10 and all profits are going to CALM – The Campaign Against Living Miserably.

Mr Bird, Head of Social Sciences

