

Dame Alice Owen's School newsletter



Letter from the Head

Hannah Nemko

Dear All,

At Dame Alice Owen's School we strive to fulfil 'the Owen's Way' providing, amongst other things, opportunities for all. This newsletter is, once again, testimony to how well we manage to achieve this.

The pages which follow are full of reports of visits, charity work, sporting achievements, expeditions, competition successes, theatre visits and alike. Some of these opportunities are directly linked to the curriculum, some further support the curriculum through extended opportunity and some provide cultural opportunities for our students; some take place inside school, some outside.

We have many people to thank for providing these opportunities; we naturally turn our attention to our fantastic staff who give generously of their time to enrich our children's education but many forget to recognise another important group without whom many of the resources and opportunities our children enjoy would be impossible. This group includes the members of the Owen's School Association (the OSA) and all of you who support their events and rotas.

The OSA, led by Glenn Taylor and Kate Mackintosh, are a team of incredible parents who help to guarantee that the enrichment we can offer our children is shielded from the continued threat from the real term cuts in budget as well those implied that are still to come. This year alone, the OSA raised over £37,000 and the school could not be more grateful.

Amongst other things, the OSA's generous donations over these last years have helped towards building the new teaching block, notably furnishing the classrooms with the latest teaching TVs which have enhanced teaching for all.

We have been able to purchase cameras to allow greater recourse to photography within art, as well as permitting better photographic documentation of projects in textiles and food technology.

Following feedback from the examination board, we have bought a wider and more appropriate array of plates and dishes on which students are able to present their



Issue highlights...

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People fundraiser [page 6](#)



Owen's actors excel in Winter Play [page 13](#)



Sports successes and team highlights [page 17](#)





food technology examination pieces, this has led to increased grades in some cases.

Equipment in design and technology has been replaced much more quickly than we would have been able to have done otherwise ensuring that 'the right tool for the job' has always been there for our students in both examination and non-examination classes. Whilst we take such things as having a fully functioning workshop for granted, we must remember how lucky we are and that the majority of schools cannot afford to replace equipment as quickly.

In music, we have been able to acquire an array of instruments to support curriculum learning as well as extra-curricular opportunities.

Anyone who has sought refuge from the sun (or more recently the wind and rain) under the PE gazebo has the OSA to thank. The PE department is now also able to refresh their cricket nets, buy new table tennis tables, as well as equipment for the new on-site gym we hope to open before the end of the academic year; the OSA's contribution towards a new minibus, used for all sorts of school events, not just for sport, has been very welcome too.



OSA contributed easels for the Art Department as well as cameras that allow students to record their progress.

In maths, science and MFL, the OSA has funded an array of e-resources which the students have found incredibly useful. If your child enjoyed rat dissection club, you may also have wondered who bought the rats?!

Our students all enjoy the opportunity to meet the authors who visit throughout the year. They bring inspiration for creative writing and encouragement for some to read a different genre of book, these opportunities can only run thanks to the success of the OSA.

It is not just the academic staff who feel supported by the generosity of the OSA. Students looking for support in running their own clubs and societies have also been lucky enough to receive grants from the OSA to allow them to bring their plans to fruition. The OSA has bought equipment to allow Rocket club, Chess club, History club and Dungeons and Dragon's club as well as Tech Crew, amongst others, to run providing opportunities for student leadership as well as for friendships and further learning to develop.

We can only guarantee this level of opportunity, resource and support whilst the OSA continues to flourish and for this to happen, it needs YOUR continued support.

How you can support the OSA

There are several ways that you can support the OSA:

- **Attend OSA meetings** – The most impactful way you can help guarantee that your child will be able to continue to have all these additional opportunities and resources open to them is to come along to our meetings, held at 7:30pm on the first Monday of the month when school is in session, and get involved with running one of our events. **The next meeting will include the AGM which will be held on Monday 2nd March at 7:30pm in the Old Library.**

The OSA has contributed musical instruments for the Music Department and clocks for the Chess Club.



- **Join the refreshment rota team** – Sign up to be part of the refreshment rota team running the bar at concerts and parents' evenings. This only needs to take an hour or so of your time once or twice a year but will help bring an important stream of income into the school.
- **Attend events** – Whether you are a quiz buff or not, the quizzes are always a brilliant night out, so get a table together and have fun whilst knowing that every penny you spend goes directly towards supporting your child! Similarly with the summer festival where the food, music and entertainment is always exceptional.
- **Sign up for EasyFundraising** – Those who have signed up to EasyFundraising and remember to do their online shopping through the EasyFundraising website <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> have helped bring an additional £10,000 into the school. It is easy to sign up to and helps us raise money at no additional cost to you.
- **Enquire about Match Funding** – If you work for a major corporation including a bank or building society, insurance company, supermarket, utility provider, phone company or car manufacturer, the chances are that they are registered for 'Match Funding' which means that they will match the amount of money an employer raises or donates to a charity (such as the OSA). This means that were you to attend at an event such as the Quiz or the Fete and help to run a stall (or the bar!) your company would be able to double the amount raised in the area in which you were helping. You can imagine the positive benefit this has brought to the school over the recent years and how much more we could raise with more matched fundraisers! If you work in an industry that subscribes to this scheme, please speak to your HR department for more information and come along and help out – you will be able to make a huge difference to our school.

The members of the OSA are, in the vast majority, busy working parents. They work together as a team to accomplish a huge amount without feeling overwhelmed with additional responsibilities. Any amount of time you have to donate to helping the school through the OSA would be greatly valued.

The 'S' of the Owen's way stands for supportive community, with your continued support, we hope to be able to continue to provide the high standards of resource and opportunity that we have all grown to expect from Dame Alice Owen's School.

To find out more about forthcoming events look at the OSA page of the school website or head straight to www.theosa.org.uk.

For more information about how you can get involved please contact Glenn or Kate at chair@theosa.org.uk.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM or subsequent events and meetings.

Hannah Nemko

Free School Meals: Helping Families, Helping Owen's

We know that there are families in the school who are entitled to free school meals for their child each day but, for their own reasons, don't claim it. Importantly, the entitlement also provides additional opportunities for students including support with music tuition, trips and much more.

We would like to help make it as easy as possible for you to access these opportunities if entitled to them.

It's all very private

Your child will just choose their meal in the canteen and pay with their finger, like anyone else.

They can pick what they want.

Some schools insist on students having a free school meal to choose the meal of the day. We let them have the same choice as everyone else, it's simply a different way of topping up the finger. You, like all parents, can restrict certain food items and, like all parents, you can add money onto your child's account to top up.

It's easy to set up

Each local council does things slightly differently, but it's quite straightforward. The forms can be found online, or collected from your local council. If you google 'free school meal gov' you are taken to a page that asks for your postcode and then links to the right council's page. We can also support you with applications in school if that helps – just email or phone using the contacts below and we can guide you through applying.

No-one will judge

Just like a pension or NHS appointment, this is a confidential entitlement. We want to encourage families to have access to what will help them. Only a restricted number of staff are aware of this.

It helps the school too – massively

School funding has changed and a large part of this is that payments to school are based on how many students are entitled to free school meals. It is therefore really important to the school that families claim when they can, it means we get more funding per pupil to pay for teachers and support.

The food is great

Not like school dinners used to be!

Your child may qualify if you're entitled to receive one or more of the following:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- An income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
- Universal Credit (your household income must be less than £7400 p.a. after tax)

Do please apply if you can, it helps your pocket, your child's tummy, and our budget! If you need any more information or help, please contact the pastoral office on 01707 622849 or email

jacksont@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Below are a number of charities that provide help and advice if you have something you want to chat through or if you are concerned about your or someone else's mental health.



THE MIX – ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FOR UNDER 25s

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK. We offer advice about sex, relationships, drugs, mental health, money, housing, jobs and anything else you may want to talk about – no topic is out of bounds.

We provide a free, confidential support service offering help through phone, text, web, social and counselling.

Whether it be through our articles and video content online or our phone, email, peer to peer and counselling services – The Mix puts the control in your hands.

For further information and help making pupils aware of The Mix, email: info@themix.org.uk



SHOUT

Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. We offer in-the-moment help for times when life gets overwhelming and you need immediate support.

- If you need urgent help **Text Shout** to **85258**
- All texts are answered by trained and supervised Crisis Volunteers.
- It is confidential and free on the major UK networks and won't show up on your phone bill

For further information and help making pupils aware of Shout go to: www.giveusashout.org/resources/



YOUNG MINDS

Young Minds are leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges.

For further information and to learn more about Young Minds' online resources go to <https://youngminds.org.uk> or email: ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk



CHILDLINE

You can talk to Childline about anything. No problem is too big or too small. Call free on **0800 1111** or get in touch online at childline.org.uk. However you choose to contact Childline you're in control. It's confidential and you don't have to give your name if you don't want to.

Owen's raises money for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People



Here at Dame Alice Owen's School, we do whatever we can to help support the local community, which is why we decided to raise money for the charity [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#) through our winter Gym and Dance display. This organisation does vital work to help deaf people feel more comfortable in society and bring attention to a problem that not everyone is aware of.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People train dogs to alert deaf people to important sounds or signals they would normally miss, this can be extremely useful and sometimes even life-saving. As well as this, the dog can make people aware that its owner is deaf, which can help them in public as deafness is a hidden disability and people might not be able to tell if a person is deaf and not act accordingly. They do such amazing things and we were so happy to be able to help them.



A few weeks before the Gym and Dance display, we had an assembly from some representatives of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People which informed us of the struggles deaf people face, especially children. It was an extremely interesting assembly and got us thinking about how we could help. Our teachers decided to raise money by asking for donations per program during our display, we raised over £140.

One of the reasons we decided to donate to this charity and why this is so close to our hearts is because in our school we have several hearing-impaired students, many of which participated in the Gym and Dance display. We want deaf and hearing-impaired students to feel like they can get involved in anything they want and to open up opportunities for everyone which is why we loved raising money for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Evie Salama, Year 9

Charity prefects' update on student charity projects

Last term, DAOS students focused their time fundraising for [The Rainforest Trust UK](#). The charity prefects spent time selling cakes and also ran a non-school uniform day. The Rainforest Trust UK have used the £1,310 we raised to help them protect threatened tropical forests and endangered wildlife.

One hundred per cent of our donation goes to this important conservation work. In addition, our donation to the Rainforest Trust UK was doubled as part of the Rainforest Trust SAVES Challenge, which aims to protect 50 million acres of threatened habitat by 2020. Through this challenge, all donations to specific projects and the Conservation Fund are doubled by a generous friend of Rainforest Trust. This means every donation made to the Rainforest Trust UK will save twice as much rainforest!

Last term, we sold Panto tickets, raising £500 for [Crisis](#), which is a charity that addresses homelessness but also helps the person as a whole. Our donation has helped provide counselling, health check-ups, CV preparation and interview practice.

We also worked with the [Trussell Trust](#) to donate food in October. They support a nationwide network of food banks and together provide emergency food and support to people locked in poverty, and campaign for change to end the need for food banks in the UK.

This term we have many exciting events coming up to help raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital. Leading these events will be the charity prefects: Eleanor, Kirti, Sophie, Nikitha, Mia, Regina, Arabela, Joanna, Katie and Isobel.



DOAS SUPPORTS INSIDE OUT DAY

Students and teachers recognised **Inside Out Day** on the 6th February by wearing a jumper of their choice inside out.

The purpose of this day, which took place in Children's Mental Health Week, is to remind us that while people may look OK on the outside, we don't really know how they are feeling on the inside.

We should remember to treat everyone with kindness, genuinely ask others how they are feeling (sometimes you need to ask more than once), listen carefully to the response and speak to a trusted adult if you are worried about your or anyone else's mental health.



NEWS FROM THE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Year 7 take part in Land Rover 4x4 school competition

Congratulations to our two Year 7 teams, Phoenix and Barbarian, who competed in the regional finals of the [Land Rover 4x4 in Schools](#) competition on 28th January. Prior to the event, the pupils spent many of their lunchtimes designing their own Land Rover cars and making the bodywork for their radio-controlled models.

During the competition, which took place at Harlow College, the teams were assessed on their design portfolios, their verbal presentations and driving skills. Despite being the youngest year group in the competition, and facing some very tough competitors, our two teams performed very well and team Barbarian were presented with a Future Stars award.

The pupils put a lot of time and effort into the competition and they worked extremely well together in their teams. We wish them all well as they begin their preparations for next year's event.



Phoenix Team: Maaria Bhatti, Mathilde Blanc, Martha Mills, Ourania Neophytou, Zara Qadus and Corinne Urquhart



Barbarian Team: Aidan Bailie, Seth Baker, Toby Dixon and Thomas Partridge

NEWS FROM THE MATHS DEPARTMENT

SIXTH FORMERS COMPETE IN SENIOR MATHS CHALLENGE

In November, 113 Sixth Form Owen's students sat the Senior Maths Challenge. 18 students achieved a Gold Award with 14 invited to take part in the Senior Maths Kangaroo and four to take part in the British Maths Olympiad Round 1. Year 13 student Sebastian Kreutz-Wellsted achieved full marks in the Senior Maths Challenge – which is a remarkable achievement. Well done Sebastian!

Congratulations to our **Kangaroo candidates:** Sam Harrison, Alfred Marriage Massey, Alexander Stapleton, Samuel Hewson, Katherine Scott, Ethan Dommett, Ankur Singh, Jemima Atputharatnam, Liam Keohane, Billy Banks, Scott Willard, Annabel Hall, Will Mellenfield and Alex Lytrides

And to our **BMO1 candidates:** Sebastian Kreutz-Wellsted, Aron Thomas, Zak Buzzard and Jeremy Weinstein.

Aron Thomas and Zak Buzzard got through to the BMO2 and we are awaiting the results of that competition.

Our big event this term was the Intermediate Maths Challenge, which took place on Thursday 6th February.

NEWS FROM THE FOOD TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Year 10 pupil wins commendation in catering competition



Year 10 pupil Rohan Misir took part in the National finals of the [Teflon Diamond Standard Awards Competition](#) on Friday 29th January 2020. This national catering competition acknowledges and promotes excellence among young catering professionals and keen home cooks. Congratulations to Rohan who received an award of 'most commended chef' in the Keen Young Cook's category.

"My signature dish was a raspberry soufflé which showcased a range of skills," said Rohan. "Lesley Waters, one of the judges,

was very impressed with how we all worked in the professional kitchen and asked us many questions about our dish.

"The head chef helped me with styling my soufflé plate and made suggestions on adding a different component. The student chefs from Bournemouth and Poole College were also hands on and helped with setting up for the event and they made us a lovely two-course lunch.

"I have gained a strong understanding of how a professional kitchen operates and I am so happy to take away some tailor-made chef whites, a Teflon frying pan and a food probe as a gift from the event," said Rohan.



NEWS FROM THE COMPUTING & ICT DEPARTMENT

Pupils reach Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge finals



Talented students Rufus Jasko (Year 9), Stephen Goodlad and Jacob Roberts (both Year 8) were invited to the Department of Computer Science at the University of Oxford on Sunday 26th January as finalists in the national computing competition – the [UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge](#).

Reaching the final of the Intermediate age group (12-14 year olds) is an impressive achievement, as 130,774 students entered the first round for this age group.

Rufus, Stephen and Jacob were among the top 48 highest

achieving students invited to the final round in this age group, and were presented with their finalist's certificate at a prize-giving ceremony at Hertford College.

Congratulations also to Sebastian Kreutz-Wellsted in Year 13 (pictured right) who came first in the finals of Bebras, which was held on Sunday 9th February – an absolutely fantastic achievement.



NEWS FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

DAOS makes Student Investor Challenge semi-finals

Two teams from DAOS have battled their way into the [Student Investor Challenge](#) semi-finals, beating over 9,000 teams from schools around the UK and abroad.

At the start of the year, a number of students across Years 10 to 13 entered the Student Investor Challenge. Run by the London Institute of Banking & Finance, this national competition challenges teams of schoolchildren to invest virtual money on the London Stock Exchange and trade stocks and shares to make a profit.

The first team, called Crane PLC, consists of four Year 13 students: William Wilson, Hannah Chen, Jet Wang and Aaron Thomas. The second team, Bagelboiz, features Ola Kawonczyk, Elaine Lin, Nabilah Ahmed and Ranjana Ram – all students from Year 11.



Congratulations to both teams and we look forward to seeing how they get on in the next round, battling the remaining 499 teams to try and reach the final in London.

School's Economics Society calls for guest speakers

We have had a changing of the guard within the DAOS Economics Society. Gregoire Denjean and Avery Kilner are now in charge and are looking for speakers for the school's Economic Society talks. If you are interested, then please drop us a line, we'd love to invite you in.

Denjean and Kilner's first speaker was Matthew Lesh from the Adam Smith Institute and his talk was titled 'Everything is Awesome', which explained how the world is in a much better position than what we might think if you only watched the news headlines.

Mr Simpson's podcast *Economics in Ten* wins award

Some of you may be aware that Mr Simpson has a podcast called *Economics In Ten*. He records the podcast with an old colleague from DAOS called Mr Clift and they use it to share their love of economics across the world. There are a number of episodes that feature famous economists and a few specials based on particular topics.

We're delighted to report that they recently won the 'Podbible Independent Podcast of 2019' award in the Podbible polls and you can read about it [here](#).



If you'd like to listen to his podcast or share it with people who might like it, then you can find it on any podcasting platform – here is a link to it. Hopefully you'll enjoy it. In the spirit of the OWENS way – never stop learning! <https://open.spotify.com/show/44pl1bcAKbrA2fLZpwJF4X>

NEWS FROM THE TEXTILES DEPARTMENT

Year 10 & 12 visit Alexander McQueen *Roses* exhibition

In January, Year 10 and 12 Textiles students had the opportunity to visit the *Roses* exhibition on the top floor of the Alexander McQueen flagship store in London's Bond Street.

The exhibition has been co-curated by the brand's Creative Director, [Sarah Burton](#), who intends to open the space to inspire young and creative talent. The exhibition is open to the public and they also run private visits for student groups.



Couture collections

This was a great opportunity for students to view couture and ready-to-wear garments up close. The exhibition was closed to the public during our visit and Kudi, the exhibition co-ordinator, gave us a guided tour. It was fascinating to hear anecdotes about Alexander McQueen's early collections and catwalk shows and also to understand how his legacy has been continued by Sarah Burton.

On display were garments from the current collection alongside vintage pieces from their archives.

Once we had finished the tour, students were encouraged to take photos and explore the exhibition at their own pace. Kudi was available throughout to answer questions and the staff could not have been more welcoming to our party. It was the most inspiring visit and the students are now full of ideas for their own GCSE projects.

Ms Cerny

Head of Food and Textiles



NEWS FROM THE ART DEPARTMENT

Author and illustrator Rob Biddulph leads art workshops



We were delighted to welcome Rob Biddulph, Old Owenian, bestselling and multi-award winning author and illustrator to the Art Department this half term.

Rob's first picture book *Blown Away* was only the second illustrated book in history to win the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and he is the official World Book Day Illustrator for 2019 and 2020.

As well as taking us through his story as a professional artist and art director, and his current work, Rob led two workshops leading the students to create a 'realistic painting' using the Wacom tablets, adding another tool to their artistic arsenal.



The sessions were inspiring and we are grateful to Rob for sharing his expertise with our young artists. Thank you to Mrs Grigson for organising the activity.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

YEAR 11 ENJOY EAST END HISTORY WALKING TOUR

In January, our Year 11 History students took part in an East End walking tour of London as part of their GCSE Crime and Punishment Module.

Seven registered guides took 150 students around various sites relevant to the history of the East End which included material on poverty, policing and the notorious crimes of Jack the Ripper.

Although a very chilly day for a two hour walk (thankfully though we just dodged a downpour!), the students reacted superbly to the guides with precise and searching questioning which was much appreciated. The guides certainly brought the atmosphere of late Victorian London to life and gave students a real sense of the dark and sometimes treacherous underbelly of the capital.



NEWS FROM THE DRAMA DEPARTMENT

Winter Play: *Sherlock Holmes & the Strange Case of the Circassian Dagger* by Miss Govier

I guess when you write a play about Professor Moriarty attempting to unleash a deadly virus on the world, you are asking for trouble...the 'Twinfluenza' as I'd affectionately called it in the play became a horrid reality and swept through the cast at a deadly rate, striking down not just the actors but also the Stage Manager and the Sound Designer. However as the saying goes, 'The show must go on' and when extra help was needed we were only too glad to say yes to Alumni Aiden Woolley and professional Stage Manager Maz Bryden who gave up their time to support us. Wesley Wilson, our Technical Manager even become part of stage crew to ensure that with a traverse staging everything ran smoothly.



I waited five years to stage a play in the genre of Sherlock Holmes and it all stemmed from a Year 7 lesson based on mini-scripts that I asked students to extend based on various genres. All those years ago, Oliver Crofts wrote this astonishing scene, with all the character, style and wit that I'd asked for. He and Jacob Hirschhorn acted it out with equal aplomb as they were a great double-act even then. After that lesson I thought that one day, if I was to write a full length play featuring Sherlock Holmes that it would feature them in the lead roles. Of course the story wouldn't be the same without an equally evil villain and everyone was sure in the auditions that Dan Thomas was perfect for the role of Moriarty as his affected voice could grate cheese! The 'Order of the Gemini' was co-headed by his evil twin Faedra, which Ciara O'Brien was delighted to play from the moment she was cast and equally keen for her character to escape retribution to ensure a sequel!

There had to be characters able to counteract the evil twins, so enter an Italian heiress, who needed to be unhappily married and seeking her daughter's safety. In order for authenticity and inspiration, I did some research and was only too happy to discover

Countess Oldoini, who was literally the instigator of the first 'selfie'! Although I didn't use much of her real history in the play, her spirited attitude to life and her jealous husband certainly came to life in Tallulah Milligan's performance opposite Oliver Hurrey.

This little group of characters developed into a dark backstory for the eponymous dagger of the play's title, an ancestor of the Countess being a woman who was originally from Circassia. I decided that the Countess should have a loyal love interest played with much sincerity by Sami Winder and her best friend the wildly eccentric Madame Sosostri played by Mia Dacosta.

I knew who would play Queen Victoria's daughters expertly, as these roles desired serious naturalistic dialogue and responses to their respective situations so I cast Year 11 GCSE Drama students. The many scandals involved in the royal family enabled these older girls to consider the difficulties associated with choosing partners to please their mama rather than their hearts. There were some love matches, but there were also references to love affairs that made the papers even in Victoria's time; the press were as equally ravenous for gossip as they are now. Well done to Ella Ayres, Eliza Hogermeer, Katya Kirby, Freya Lyngnes and Lydia Littlejohn who played the sisters initially and respectively with such maturity.





Of course I cannot omit praise for other more serious roles in the play, of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert played by Sophie Walk and Daniel Hughes. Although Prince Albert was supposed to be a frustrated 'puppet' who wanted more responsibility and respect, I gave him more of a comedic role whereas the role of Empress as such a well-known historical figure was to be more complex. Victoria appears to be the epitome of the 'stiff upper lip', but I believe that she must have had a wicked sense of humour too for their relationship to be engaging.

Other more serious roles of Prince Bertie and his long-suffering wife Princess Alix of Denmark were played by David Sleeman and Keira Hall with real gravitas. This was to make the relationship with Bertie's mistress all the more realistic, as although he was a 'player' of his time with many mistresses, it would appear that his feelings for Lily Langtry were genuine for a time at least and these emotive scenes were more than

enhanced by Sophia Ingham as his married and conflicted mistress.

And what of the love interests...well there were quite a few, including Mrs Hudson and Mycroft Holmes. Harry Brooks was always going to play Mrs Hudson, because for some reason everyone else who tried out the role just couldn't get her voice right so when he needed an understudy it had to be Max! I also wanted Mrs Hudson to be a 'fusser', which provided a great distraction every time Mycroft was trying to get her attention, witheringly played by Bradley Neighbour who on the last night touchingly said, 'I knew I'd end up in a dress in one of your productions Miss!'

The role of the audacious Irene Adler was played by Rachel Alden who on the last night told me she wished she had auditioned for 'As You Like It' last year, having enjoyed herself so much. I was really impressed by the way she played her role, comfortable in picking up any accent when asked! She certainly brought a real sparkle to the role and



was a brilliant adversary for the crazed sister of Moriarty in the infamous cake-slice scene. I don't think I will ever stop laughing thinking about Jacob doing a slow-motion 'No!' while she ran offstage with a cake box...

Of course Dr Watson's love interest (Emily Littlejohn) was always going to be the romantic relationship that we were all expecting to counteract the rather bizarre one between Holmes and Adler. Rather than her being

all Victorian damsel in distress, I thought that she would be a little more circumspect in my production, a strong independent woman who wants to be married on equal grounds. Of course in the time period, nurses couldn't marry, or rather if they did they had to leave their profession, so essentially a marriage would have been the end of her career, although I feel that Emilia's spirit probably wouldn't have allowed for that. I think that lots of laughs came through the juxtaposition of the relationships of Sherlock and Watson which were admirably and amusingly played by both couples.

Year 12 girls were always whispering 'Sherlock...' in full support of me writing the script; you were all in it in one way or another! Daisy Leonard as the children's straight-talking nanny and Elizabeth Rose as the 'dresser' for actresses Anna Pascoulis, Alessia Moretti, Amy Mackley, Edie Marriage-Massey and Lucy Cameron at Drury Lane.

Not only did they provide much needed pep-talk when I needed it, they also choreographed the three dances for the masquerade ball, the ballet and the gypsy dance at the end.



Moriarty's henchmen were played expertly by Louis Bailie and Luka Shaw. These two spent many rehearsals pointing out all the historical discrepancies in the plot until I just gave in and said; 'It's vaguely 1860s – it's called dramatic licence!' Their villainous beards and hairstyles got more and more dramatic as the nights went on and I swear Louis' scar had a life of its own!

Molly Mardel, Maria He and Helen Henwood were equally adept at relaying the progression of the narrative arc through their amusing prologues to the audience and by the first night Maria and Helen were playing main roles due to illness. I was particularly impressed with how they had clearly been paying attention in all the rehearsals putting into practice everything I had directed them to do and more.

And last but by no means least, who could forget the imposing Inspector Lestrade and his side-kicks played by Patrick Leonard and Matthew

Brown, their 'Triple-Act' was truly ridiculous involving abandoned body parts and misconstrued theories based on very little evidence; my favourite moment involved a severed foot, a Cuban heel and a tattoo of a steak and kidney pie!



The cast, as ever, were wonderful and on the last night I said pretty much everything that I am saying here now... you were all amazing, every single one of you and I

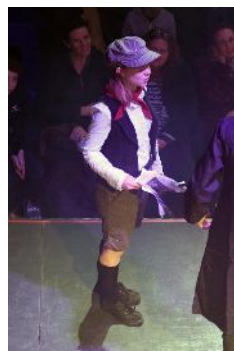
was extremely grateful that you all chose to audition and be a part of the production. A special thank you must be made to Maria He (Molly), Helen Henwood (Princess Louise) and Zoe Gunasekera (Emilia Borgia and Princess Vicky) who played others' roles with very little notice. Zoe's little acts of kindness went a long way, volunteering to write props lists, playing any character who was absent in rehearsals, or simply offering me a piece from a huge tray bake of chocolate brownies on the last night when I was both elated

and exhausted; she is an angel!



I believe this is the nature of our actors, they think about the bigger picture, the ability to empathise and support each other and the last three nights were a superb example of that within the cast. When we were chatting about the show on the penultimate night Mrs Nicolaides, Mr Marshall and I agreed that the most touching thing about the cast backstage was how they spoke about themselves as a company; saying 'we' whenever they shared successes and some equally funny anecdotes about lost lines and accidental bruises!

On that final night, it was time to say farewell to Wesley Wilson our Head of Technical Crew who ironically ended up as a stage-hand in his last production, which is where he began his career in the theatre seven years ago. I would say this is typical of Wesley, who always put himself where he was most needed and was never afraid of hard labour – the amount of times he put up scaffolding, rigged lights and waded through scripts inputting lighting effects made for a phenomenal amount of hours. I know that Wesley will follow in the footsteps of other successful students who have been in this position, he has the creativity, commitment and stamina that is so valued in the theatrical world. A massive thank you for everything you have done for the Drama Department and all our extra-curricular productions; you will be much missed.





A fond farewell to our Year 13 performers Rachel Alden, Harry Brooks, Daniel Hughes, Emily Littlejohn, Lewis Makin, Bradley Neighbour and Sammy Winder – you have been in nearly every play since you were in Year 7. I know this play was special for you and although some of you weren't here on the opening night it was for good reason; you had Oxbridge interviews so a massive well done you incredibly awesome students!!!

Every single one of you have made a difference to my lessons, to rehearsals and performances, so I hope you carry the torch for the Arts and continue to tread the boards at your respective universities. For those of you who are leaving us, know that we will miss you, but you will carry all these memories with you and make new ones.

***Cyrano de Bergerac* at The Playhouse Theatre, London**

I think Year 12 Theatre Studies students all fell in love with James McAvoy's performance as Cyrano, whose ability to impart the nature of love was both hilarious and touching. This new adaptation of Edmund de Rostand's play by Martin Crimp was so beautiful, witty and moving that we instantly bought a copy and subsequently acted out some of the duologues in class. We were also given a tour backstage as Mrs Nicolaidis went to school with **Nari Blair-Mangat** who was in the production playing the role of Valvert. We really enjoyed his verbal fencing with James McAvoy, a masterclass in how to use your voice and physicality in performance.



***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at The Bridge Theatre, London**



We specifically chose this play for our GCSE & A' Level Drama students as the performance promised a wide variety of design features including the use of elaborate costumes, puppetry and aerial work which would provide a wealth of ideas to write about in their written exams in June. We were more than overwhelmed by the performance, the acting was brilliant and the way in which the director created the world of Narnia was breathtaking. The discussions we had both on the coach and in class revealed how much the students had both learned and enjoyed about their experience.

Alumni News 2019 - 2020

Gemma Barnett was nominated for best female performer in a play in the 2019 Offies for her role in *A Hundred Words for Snow* at *The Trafalgar Studios*. **Arun Blair Mangat** is currently performing in *& Juliet* as May and **Jamie Coles** is Stick Man in the *Stick Man Live Tour*.

NEWS FROM THE PE DEPARTMENT

NETBALL

Year 7 – The Year 7's have continued in their development and have managed to improve massively as a team. In the District League, the girls have managed to win all their games with scores of 36-3 against Monks Walk and 8-4 against Mount Grace. On Saturdays the girls have had to work exceptionally hard and have had some fantastic wins- most recently against St Edmunds College 19-3 for the A's and 7-1 for the B's. The continued attendance at training has meant that all students are improving and should continue with the successful season.

Year 9 – Their first game of the new year was against Aldenham School U15s and the girls achieved a resounding 42-2 victory. They then followed this up by beating Henrietta Barnett School 26-13. Kachi Akpakwu was voted as player of the match for both games. Against a strong St Helen's School side, the girls narrowly lost 21-23 with Amber Kotey picked as player of the game by the opposition. In the District League competition, the Year 9s defeated Stanborough School 29-7. A great start to 2020, well done girls and keep up the good work!

Year 11 – Well done to the Year 11 Netball team who have continued with their outstanding season. They recently beat Hertswood 35-6 playing out of positions. The girls have continued to demonstrate enthusiasm and team spirit while also trying to juggle their exams. Well done girls.



FOOTBALL

Year 9 – The Year 9 team continue to improve, producing good performances against Sandringham, Verulam and Forest. Callum Lloyd has been selected to represent Hertfordshire Schools' FA, recently playing against Sussex, Suffolk and Essex.

Year 10 – Year 10 have started the new year in good form with a draw against a strong Verulam side in our Saturday fixtures and hopefully they can continue to play well for the rest of the games this term.

1st XI – The 1st XI have had a mixed half term, the team have played some excellent football and been riddled with injuries. The boys were very unlucky and lost in the County Cup semi final on penalties. There is still a lot to play for with the boys reaching the District final and having five league games left to play. Hopefully with a bit more luck and the squad gaining players back from injury they can finish the season well and win the league and the District Cup.

Year 11 – Year 11 lost narrowly in the quarter final of the County Cup to Hemel School. They play in the quarter final of the District Cup in the next couple of weeks.

Girls Year 7 – We took two 6-a-side teams to the District tournament where our A team lost in the semi finals and the B team missed out on qualifying from the group stages by 1 point. Well done girls, great effort.

Girls Year 9 – The A team played against some very strong sides in their District 6-a-side tournament. They showed great team spirit on a wet and windy day and narrowly missed out on a place in the semi finals.

RUGBY

Year 7 – It's been another eventful half term of rugby for the Year 7s. With mid-week matches against QE boys and Parmiter's School, the team had mixed results. One of the highlights of the year has been the fantastic numbers at training. This has allowed us to field a B team on a number of occasions. This was the case against QE boys, where 30 Owens students' competed in a superb afternoon of rugby. The boys have improved significantly from the start and it has been a pleasure to see them improve. The challenge for next season is to move to 13-a-side rugby.

Year 8 – The team have continued to play midweek fixtures this half term and a good win against Parmiter's to start the year on a high. QE Barnet was a good learning experience for the boys, and we look forward to next season when they move from 13 to the 15-a-side game.

Year 10 – The players produced a fantastic effort against Tring in the County semi final, losing by a very fine margin. The challenge for this team is to make the step up to 1st XV rugby – something that they are more than capable of doing. Special mention must go to Noah Burrowes for commitment and leadership that he has shown throughout the season.

1st XV – The team travelled to Birchwood in January to play their County Cup game (in a repeat of last year's quarter final). Another close game entailed, with the boys narrowly losing by 1 score. Despite this being disappointing for the team, particularly the Year 13 players, they can all look forward to a triangular match between Hitchin Boys' and St Clement Danes in March.

CROSS COUNTRY

There has been lots of individual successes for our students since January. Freya Stapleton represented England U20s in the cross country challenge in Scotland, whilst Aimi Weightman placed a fantastic 4th at the Southern U15 cross country championships.

Many of our students took part in the county schools' championships in St Albans on Saturday 1st February. Top 10 finishers included:

Year 10/11 girls - Aimi Weightman 1st, Roisin Keohane 8th

Year 8/9 girls - Evie Wootton 5th, Anna Partridge 9th

Year 12/13 boys - Finn MacCarthy 7th

Year 10/11 boys - Ash Fowkes-Gajan 9th

Athletes who placed in the top ten have a chance of being selected to run for Hertfordshire at English Schools' championships, so fingers crossed!

BASKETBALL

Year 7 – The Year 7 boys played four games and a rally. They won three games and finished first in the rally, losing only to Ridgeway by 1 basket in their game. We look forward to them playing again as a team in Year 8.

Year 8 – The Year 8 boys have played four games and a rally. They won three games and narrowly lost to Ridgeway in both a game and rally where they finished 2nd place. Hopefully, they can take this improvement into Year 9.

NEWS FROM THE OSA

Upcoming Event: Spring Quiz, Saturday 28th March – The OSA Spring Quiz is taking place on the evening of Saturday 28th March. For our November Quiz, we made many successful improvements to our usual format all of which were very well received. This is one of the feedback notes sent to us after the Quiz:

Dear Quiz team,

This is a "better late than never" hero-gram for the PTA quiz. It was excellent – dramatically changed and every single bit of it for the better. The quiz host was entertaining and decisive, the questions were fun, the food flowed easily, the whole thing ran to time, and all round everyone I know who went declared it the best DAO quiz they'd been to, by a long shot, if not the best big quiz they'd been to at all. Please pass on my congratulations to everyone who worked so hard and had the foresight to make the improvements. Much appreciated, and what a jolly night out that showed off the school in its best light. Thank you.

Tickets completely sold out for the last Quiz, and based on the feedback we received, are likely to sell out even quicker this time, so please do book early. You can book a table of 8-10 with other parents or friends or if fewer, we will match you up with other parents. The booking site can be found at buytickets.at/theosa

Prices once again remain the same as the last few years, the food will be plentiful and the bar will be fully stocked.

If you are able to bring a raffle prize with you (or drop off at reception if you are unable to attend), it would be very much appreciated. If you are willing to donate a more expensive gift (with a value of £50 or more), we are likely to auction it on the evening. Both the raffle and the auction make a huge difference to monies raised so please do help if you can.

This is a really fun way for you to support the School, so we very much hope to see you on the night.



QUIZ NIGHT
SATURDAY 28TH MARCH 2020
7PM FOR A 7.30PM START at DAME ALICE OWEN'S SCHOOL

All adults and 6th formers welcome

SUPPER INCLUDED* *BAR* *RAFFLE Please do not bring your own drinks

£15 per person **£6** for students

Max 10 people per table. Don't be shy about ordering one, two or any number of places as we can make numbers up to 8 or 10 using year and form groups.

OFFERS OF RAFFLE PRIZES OR AUCTION ITEMS GREATLY APPRECIATED

Purchase tickets at: www.buytickets.at/theosa. For queries email events@theOSA.org.uk

ALL FUNDS RAISED SUPPORT DAME ALICE OWEN'S SCHOOL

Refreshments – The OSA serve drinks and snacks at about 40 events a year, mostly concerts and Parents' Evenings. If you are able to help with drinks at any of these this and next term please email Sharon on refreshments@theosa.org.uk.

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 to yourself. Just go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and select Owen's School Association as your charity. For those thinking about holidays, lots of travel companies take part in the scheme.

Book Covers – Book covers are available for sale during the year and an order form can be found on the OSA website, www.theosa.org.uk. Alternatively, a paper copy of the order form can be found in a yellow folder in the OSA box. Please mark any envelopes 'book cover order'.

Match Funding – If you are employed by a company that is able to offer matched funding and would like to make a donation to Owen's School Association, please contact matchfunding@theosa.org.uk.

200 Club – The OSA operate a Lottery style 200 club with two £50 prizes drawn per month, often with an extra draw taking place in December. Annual membership is £12 per number. For further details please contact Deepika via 200club@theOSA.org.uk.



School Uniform – Good quality previously owned school uniform is available throughout the year by contacting Julia Clews. School uniform will be available to purchase at Parents' Evenings.

All items are carefully displayed and priced reasonably. Payment can be made by cash or cheque (payable to Owen's School Association). Of course, all funds raised go back to the school. Stock is made up of donations and uncollected items of lost property stored in the school office at the end of each academic year.

Donations of **good quality** items can be put in the red wheelie bin in the school entrance hall or handed in to the school office, in a suitable bag labelled for the attention of Julia Clews "OSA Nearly New".

OSA Website – www.theosa.org.uk. Please take a look! The OSA continues to add content and make improvements and would welcome your feedback. If you have any comments, suggestions or can help in any way please get in touch at contact@theosa.org.uk.

OSA AGM and Committee – If anyone would like to attend an OSA committee meeting and help raise funds for the school, meetings are held on the first Monday of each month currently at 7.30pm in The Old Library. The meeting on 2nd March will start with the OSA AGM. You can attend as a one off or join the committee, it's up to you. We would love to see some new faces and look forward to welcoming you.

Facebook – Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#).



Music and Drama 2020

Spring Term

Thursday 27th February
South East Schools Chamber Music Festival

Sunday 1st March
The Regional Festival of Music for Youth, Watford

Tuesday 3rd March at 7pm
Concertos and more
Edward Guinness Hall
Tickets available online through WisePay

Wednesday 11th March at 7pm
Soul Band Evening
Main Hall
Tickets available online through WisePay

Tuesday 17th March at 7pm
Chamber Concert 2
Edward Guinness Hall
Tickets available online through WisePay

Tuesday 24th March at 7pm
Choirs and Concertos
Edward Guinness Hall
Tickets available online through WisePay

Wednesday 1st April at 7pm
The April Concert
Edward Guinness Hall
Tickets available online through WisePay



ADVANCED LEARNING ALLIANCE PAID MATHS AND PHYSICS INTERNSHIPS

**Are you studying Maths or Physics at University?
Are you thinking about a career in teaching?**

**Would you like to earn up to £1,200 for a four-week
internship?**

The Advanced Learning Alliance is offering school internships to prepare University Students for Teacher Training via School Direct, SCITT or University-based PGCE. School Direct involves work-based training with a generous bursary in Maths and Physics. Internships are based in local Outstanding Schools. We will support you to gain the most out of school internship by:-

- Supporting and mentoring you throughout the Internship. You will have a personal teacher mentor.
- The opportunity to work with small groups and whole classes.
- The opportunity for you to mentor sixth formers in preparation for their University applications.
- The chance to take part in projects and activities across at least two schools.
- Opportunities to join school trips, enrichment activities and wider school activities.
- We will provide written testimonials and references for Interns who successfully complete the course, as well as comprehensive information about routes into teaching.

**We are now in our sixth year of successful delivery of
internships.**

Placements will be available in June and July 2020 and applications are now open.

We are interested in undergraduates studying the following subjects: **Maths, Physics, Computing, Engineering or who have elements of those subjects in their degree.**

To apply please email a letter and CV to Miss Jane Hart, Director of Teaching and Learning, Watford Grammar School for Girls j.hart@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk