



SUMMER 2013 ISSUE 2

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot: Alan Bennett

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

THE new tennis courts are appearing, the last traces of the old school have been reduced to a pile of rubble and the vast view of the playing fields has begun to emerge on the horizon. Next school year will bring more treasure and privilege. We are fortunate. Summer terms used to be quiet and gentle but, in this demanding world, they are as important as the rest. In any case, we never rest here. The demands on young people are increasing and we must be vigilant in our determination to ensure their success. But there must be fun and respite from study and, indeed, there has been. Nearly 200 of our students delighted in hosting an afternoon with Alan Bennett. When it is impossible to procure a ticket to see his most recent play, it is a unique opportunity to have him here in person. I was also enchanted to watch our students enjoy a performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, performed by the English National Opera in our School Hall: again, we are so privileged. Marking the close of Year 11 was as pleasurable as ever, as were my final moments with Year 13. It is with a sense of wonderment that I see young adults leave who, but a blink of an eye ago, were eleven-year-old cherubs! So to summer: a chance to reflect and refresh.

MR COLIN HALL, HEAD



CONVERSION NEARS COMPLETION

WORK to convert the school to Academy status is nearing completion. Recently, we have been consulting with staff and representative unions to move colleagues' employment status over to the Academy. Conversion should take effect from 1st September. May I remind parents that we retain Holland Park School as our title and, for students, there will be little notable change. We have made adjustments to our curriculum offer, thereby extending provision and opportunity for all.

Additionally, though not specifically linked to Academy status, we are introducing a 21-period week (an additional learning period). This will extend the curriculum further for all students. This move to Academy status is an exciting development for the school, which, alongside our brand new building and our exceptional examination performance, will enable continued and growing success.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL, ASSOCIATE HEAD



Metamorphosis

SHEPHERD continue to make excellent progress with phase 3 of our building programme. This term, we have watched the collapse of the old school hall, which completed the demolition programme of the original buildings. We can now see what an exceptional space we have on which our various play and sports facilities will shortly be laid. Standing in the new School Hall, looking out over the construction site, is an exciting experience. The programme is currently on schedule, and we look forward to its completion in November.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL, ASSOCIATE HEAD

The great outdoors

THE summer term is witness to the creation of a new outdoor space at Holland Park School. In place of the old, dated concrete tennis courts, there will be a bespoke Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The surface will be installed to Sport England's specification, and will provide students with a fantastic area to enhance their sporting skills. The arrival of the first batch of Westminster teak benches will also provide students with high quality, outdoor seating to rival any of London's most prestigious parks. And all of this is in addition to what awaits us on completion of phase 3 of the building project: an all-weather sports pitch, a further MUGA sport area, a mini-amphitheatre and even a nature trail.

MR PAUL EAKINS, DIRECTOR OF PREMISES

Sir John Baker CBE, Chair of Governors



AS we close the academic year, we bid farewell to Sir John Baker CBE, our Chair of Governors. Sir John has been a Governor since the late 1990s and Chair since 2003. I am hugely indebted to Sir John for his wisdom, judgement, sense of fairness, his acutely tuned capacity to separate the trivial and the significant, his breadth of vision, his generosity, his appropriate protection and guidance, and his decisive actions. Sir John has captured the art of exemplary governance: strategic oversight, critical friend, in the background but ever vigilant. My personal debt is significant, but so is the debt that the school owes him. It is my privilege to thank him for a duty carried out with integrity, passion and care.

MR COLIN HALL, HEAD

'At Home' to local residents

On Monday June 3rd we hosted in excess of 150 local residents and friends of the school to our 'At Home' event. Having witnessed and been very much part of the building process over the past five years it was a pleasure to share our outstanding new facilities with our closest neighbours. Local residents and friends of the school were offered light refreshments on arrival and were able to peruse the building at their leisure, taking in all of the exciting and vibrant teaching spaces that have been created for students at Holland Park.

Local residents and friends of the school expressed their admiration for the design and commented on how lucky students were to attend school here. They noted also how splendidly our students have been looking after our new building. It was a pleasure to welcome individuals who have supported the re-development of the school especially as many of them re-called the journey that the school has been on over the past thirteen years to get to where we are now: a truly outstanding institution.

MR ALAN JONES, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

OPERA SQUAD

IN March, the school was hugely privileged to host the English National Opera in a performance of extracts from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Five soloists, accompanied by ENO's full 35-piece orchestra, impressed students with their incredible vocal range and breathtaking sound. For many students, it was their first experience of the sophisticated and magical world of opera.

This was followed by a visit to the London Coliseum to see Puccini's *La Bohème* – a further opportunity for students to expand their cultural horizons, in what has been a most inspiring and transformational experience through our partnership with ENO. We look forward to returning to the Coliseum in October to see Anthony Minghella's award-winning *Madam Butterfly*.

MR SIMON DOBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



University challenge

AS Year 11 and Year 13 students begin the long summer holiday full of anticipation about a new start in September, spare a thought for the anxious Year 12 student stuck in the middle. Unlike their counterparts in the years above and below, Year 12 students returned to school following AS examinations amidst the sultry summer haze – and the pressure on them was far from relenting. In addition to starting their A2 courses, university preparation began in earnest. Personal statement writing, UCAS form-filling, university visits and lecture tasters were the bread and butter of students' efforts when lessons were over, as they began the long haul towards sending off their applications in October.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Choristers extend their repertoire

IN May, two members of the school choir were given the opportunity to perform in Vivaldi's *Gloria* at St George's Church, with a chamber orchestra made up of musicians from the Royal College of Music, directed by Andrew Wells. In addition to singing alongside professional musicians, the students listened to arias and orchestral chamber music by Bach and Vivaldi. The event marked a further expansion of the students' repertoire, which has included works by Cesar Frank, Gabriel Faure and William Cornysh, in addition to arrangements by The Beatles and the medieval Wessex rota, Sumer Is Icumen In.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER





Star Gaze, Ivy Webb and Tom Vellacott.

PERFECT TENSE AWARDS

ON Thursday 4th July, an exuberant Mr Hall proudly hosted the inaugural Perfect Tense in our magnificent new school. As in years past, the venue sparkled and shimmered as students and their parents celebrated their outstanding achievements. This year, all of the students were recognised within their Houses with glowing references written by their teachers – the inspirational stories shared during assemblies of the people from whom our Houses have taken their names have clearly had a positive impact on our students. This is a tradition we hope to continue for years to come as our House system grows from strength to strength. Year 7 award winner Star Gaze enthused: "It is an amazing feeling when one knows that hard work has been acknowledged. Many thanks to my teachers for nominating me for the great honour that is Perfect Tense and for their spectacular comments." Tom Vellacott, another Year 7 winner for 2013 added: "I am so honoured to be one of the select group of students to be chosen for the prestigious Perfect Tense award and I thank you wholeheartedly for putting me in to the spotlight."

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

Vivos reap rewards

AS a reward for receiving the highest number of Vivos this year, 20 students from Years 7 and 8 travelled to the Brecon Beacons, courtesy of the Holland Park Trust. Staying in a remote area, where they revelled in the peace and tranquillity of life beyond London, students experienced a range of challenging activities, including orienteering around the valleys of the National Park, kayaking on the River Wye and developing their teamwork skills.

MR GREG SMITH, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



Cricketers triumph

THIS term, the Year 12/13 Cricket Team travelled to Ampleforth College in Yorkshire, to face their highly respected team of cricketers. Opting to bat first, and putting in 126 runs, the Holland Park attack bowled out the opposition for 102, with Akesh Velappan taking four wickets. Abdurrahman Perez was the pick of the batsmen on 21 runs. The trip was incredibly successful on a number of levels. Not only were Holland Park victorious,

but the Ampleforth staff also commented on the exceptional conduct and camaraderie of the team throughout their visit to one of Britain's most prestigious Independent Schools.

MR RICHARD BALL, TEACHER OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Bronze, Silver and Gold in their sights

CONGRATULATIONS to the 25 intrepid students who embarked on their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award last year, and are now receiving their certificates and badges. More than 100 students are currently completing the skill, physical and volunteering components of the course, with activities ranging from sports coaching and working in hospitals to learning a new language. The Silver participants have completed their expedition in the South Downs, battling through adverse weather and displaying excellent navigation and teamwork skills. Meanwhile, the most exciting aspect of the Award is yet to come for Bronze and Gold participants, with arrangements being made for students to complete walking expeditions in the Chiltern Hills, Peak District and Lake District.

MR MICHAEL CROW, DIRECTOR OF SPECIALISM

A YEAR OF SPORTING EXCELLENCE

INSPIRED by the London 2012 Olympics, this has been an exciting year of sport at Holland Park School. Our calendar has featured some prestigious fixtures and some notable victories against rival schools. Sports Week gave students the opportunity to take part in a range of new sports, while the House rounder teams battled it out for victory. The week culminated in our Sports Day and splendid annual Sports Award Presentation evening, which was hosted by students and the Physical Education Team, and recognised the achievements of our greatest sporting stars.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

Poem wins plaudits



CONGRATULATIONS to Hana Rakoci in Year 8 who has been shortlisted for the national 'Write On' poetry competition. Together with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), the National Literacy Trust launched the 'Write On' competition to give secondary school students the opportunity to write an original poem expressing their thoughts and feelings about how young people are perceived today. The competition, promoted through libraries and teachers nationwide, received more than 1,200 entries, of which Hana's poem, Heads of my People, was one of only a handful to be shortlisted. In celebration of her achievement, Hana attended a special event at the Free Word Centre in May, joining the winner of the competition and the other shortlisted candidates in a poetry workshop.

MS AMANDA REDFEARN, DEPUTY HEAD

Heads of my People

*Whisper don't shout.
They're all watching you,
Anything you say will
Be used as evidence in
A court of law.*

*Mother watches and cries,
Educated by crime sits
In the seat with the
Flashing lights above
His head and counts.*

*With his blunt hammer
And sharp words,
One by one removes the
Scalp of brave warriors
Summoned by a crowd
Of blood thirsty...*

*For sure, only to be on
Show.*

*If only he could with –
Draw his crimes and go
Back to a life with no
Expectations or stereotypes.*

*Jury already knows he's done time,
But there's never enough
"Heads to count".*

HANA RAKOCI



The art of wonder

THE summer Art and Design exhibition provides an annual opportunity to celebrate a wide variety of creative achievements in GCSE, AS and A2 level Art and Design & Technology. The gallery exhibited some dramatic and challenging installations from our talented A level students this term, as well as works by our forward-thinking Art Aptitude students. Product Designers displayed some

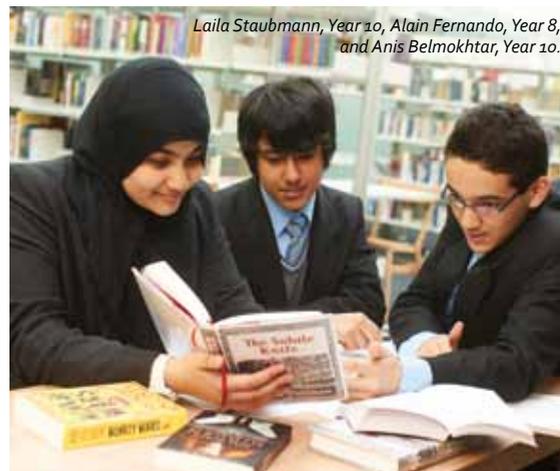
innovative design ideas that, with a little capital, could undoubtedly feature in the open market place. In addition to our summer exhibition, we have received an invitation from the Saatchi Gallery to show the equestrian exhibition by Years 7 and 8. Meanwhile, our students' work from the Art on the Underground exhibition, inspired by Sarah Morris, can be viewed at Earl's Court tube station.

MR GREG SMITH, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

FIRST STORY

THE First Story group eagerly attended the launch of this year's stunning anthology, Last Word, in July. This represented the endeavours of a committed and talented group of students, who have enjoyed the privilege of developing their creative writing skills with the author Alice Albinia since September. It has been a splendid year for First Story, with some excellent writing generated in the weekly sessions. In addition, there has been real success in national competitions, with Bochra Boudarka's piece, *The Storm*, awarded first prize in the LSE/First Story writing competition, judged by published authors including Meg Rosoff.

MR MICHAEL CROWE, DEPUTY HEAD



Laila Staubmann, Year 10, Alain Fernando, Year 8, and Anis Belmokhtar, Year 10.





LEAVERS' BALL

THE Year 11 Leavers' Ball was held at the stunning Cumberland Hotel in Marble Arch this year. Captured in their best attire by a professional photographer, they were joined by the Leadership Team and their teachers for a sumptuous three-course dinner, followed by dancing to the DJ sounds

of our very own Mr Roland Andrews. The Ball marks a significant transition point in our students' lives: a moment to celebrate all that they have achieved at Holland Park, and the opportunity to wish them well for the exams ahead and all the best for the future.

MR ROSS WILSON, DEPUTY HEAD

Alumni

AFTER graduating from Holland Park School in 2010, having gained four A*s at A2 and securing a string of A*s at GCSE, Valmir Selimi's academic career has gone from strength to strength. Reading Medicine at Queens' College, Cambridge, he achieved a 1st class degree last year and he has been awarded the Queens' College: Foundation Scholar (academic scholarship) following his stellar successes. During his third year of study, Valmir has been intercalating in Pathology and embarking

on a research project with Dr Helga Schneider. He is also undertaking clinical research at St Mary's London Vascular Unit and has been accepted into Cambridge Clinical School. While Valmir's academic success is most impressive, his prowess as captain of the Queen's College basketball team has also been astounding his fellow scholars. We have been privileged to welcome Valmir back to Holland Park to speak with our future medical students, who have been thoroughly inspired as a result.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

New beginnings

IT is a fitting time of year to recognise the contribution made by colleagues who we bid farewell to at the end of this academic year. We wish them every success in the future and thank them for their time with us. We look forward also to welcoming those colleagues who join us in September, eagerly anticipating what they in turn will add to the academic success and experiences of our students. Our gratitude too, as always, to teaching and associate staff, parents, governors and friends of the school for their on-going commitment and support; it is such shared vision and enduring relationships that lead to the success of our school community in its widest sense.

MS AMANDA REDFEARN,
DEPUTY HEAD



Year 13 dine in style

IT was the last hurrah before our Year 13 students went their separate ways to universities and employment. Staff and students met on a bright summer's evening in The Cote Restaurant in Notting Hill, dressed to impress, adorned with cameras and memories to mark the occasion. For many students, it was the end of the best part of a decade of education at Holland Park, culminating in their becoming the first leavers of the new school; an historic moment and an evening to savour.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON,
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

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