



SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 20

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot: Sir Simon Russell Beale

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

Saturday 15th June. The sun is trying hard to shine, albeit intermittently. It is currently shining on a far from finished and well behind schedule renovation of Thorpe Lodge. Shortly I intend a long tour around classrooms to look at Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 examination papers. Sometimes the very best and those of concern are 'presented' to me, but today I am off to seek the middle ground, the majority, the average, for they can go unnoticed and the unnoticed is my theme. Young people are growing up in a loud world of easy and occasionally ill-chosen words and I fear that the adult world does not always offer them considered and considerate role models. We are tempted to berate the young and hark back to some golden age but I suspect there never was a golden age, just a different one. We put before young people goals, ambition, results, outcomes (in their place and context all quite proper) but what about those for whom stellar academic performance is a step beyond? We relish those whose social self-confidence is bright but what about those quiet and shy souls? Where do they get to shine? I guess I see (as perhaps we all do) life from a certain perspective: I was not Head Boy at school, my road to the privilege of my current job was not paved with gold nor offered to me on a platter. A plodder, a worker bee. So, I feel for the ordinary and I look to the understated and those wanting in confidence. Each year I am haunted by some failure, some lack of ability to create all that one would have wished for. Slipping out of school this year, is a student who is troubled: clever, able and once socially adept, they have for inexplicable reasons 'fallen away'. In a term that some students are celebrated at *Perfect Tense*, this particular student is on my mind - for them life has currently collapsed a little. I hold them in the highest esteem and hope that time and care will retrieve them. The great and the good will be just that, but the quiet, the disappointed and somehow not quite resolved have a tougher journey and my thoughts are with them as we begin to close another school year. Life in the sunlight: life in the shadows – it is rather a lottery but my daily desire is to hope for, and help with, making students understand themselves and find joy in whatever lot has befallen them. Aim for the 'right' stars: balance ambition with personal happiness. Someone, back in the year 2000 as I sat on the precipice of coming or not coming to Holland Park, wrote to me 'Think not only of your ambitious self, think of a blade of grass, a whiff of scent'. I did not listen, I did not



heed, but I have often recalled the advice. Chasing the stars had a cost. Against such cost there have been blessings in the wonderful young people who make my days including those now at university who write (so sensitively) – as one did this week:

"Dear Colin,

I returned to Manchester late last night, after a brief post-exam holiday. I am now sat at my desk, drinking coffee from my lovely new ceramic mug. As ever, I received your post with glee. If it is not too late, I will of course accept your invitation to Perfect Tense. While I understand your hesitation, you need not ever delay to reach out. If there is ever anything I can do to help you, or Holland Park School, I am always ready to jump into action. I would see it not as a burden, but rather as an opportunity to repay you for all that you have done for me. It warms me to receive my own piece of Rye pottery and as with most that you do,

you have succeeded in making the gift thoughtful and personal. It seems that I have to say this a lot, but I must apologise for the slow response yet again, and I hope to see you, and the staff of Holland Park soon.

*Warmest regards,
Mug Number 1531."*

Treasure, treasure to be archived, all from a very quiet boy who troubled no one. The unnoticed: that is who is on my agenda as we close a year and concurrently plan for next. My Year 12 'A' Level English lessons for September are being planned in my head when I wake at 04:30 before I rise at 05:15. Does anyone have any redundant spectacles? They are big on my list of needs for September! For the outcome you will have to wait till - in the autumn term. I trust that the summer break offers you time together as a family and brings you refreshed to September.

PERFECT TENSE | 2019

For the second year running slow builders renovating Thorpe Lodge obliged us to create beauty on a netball pitch! (or some such like) and our Director of Estates did his best to offer us a French / Italianate terrace on a shoestring budget employing re-planted trees and shifting of garden plants. Notwithstanding this, we gathered to introduce the young to the sometimes not so young, but nevertheless distinguished award givers. As ever, some travelled the breadth of the country to come and meet their protégés and many return year after year to be part of the Holland Park family. From the far-flung north came June Harris, Norman Ferguson – last seen as an audience for our choir in Durham – they were joined by Ellen Beveridge, Alison Moore and Dr Linda Kirk who came to give her award to Nadia Mahmoud – off to read history at Cambridge, Linda Kirk's own alma mater. Professor Richard Carwardine briefed Tibor Klajic on the pressures of Oxbridge history. As always some of Colin Hall's students stretching back to the 1980s came to meet current students. Now in their late 40s they offered demonstrable evidence that school can be forever. Amanda Vokes, Mark Smith, Michael Pearson, Sion Elias and Will Zemansky found themselves in their annual reunion of Harrogate High School. Too many kind people to mention them all. More than ever before came our own alumni, ex-students to present their awards to their successors. Dr Valmir Selimi rushed in just as we started, straight from performing surgery, donning his dinner suit en route. Otos Valentine down from Manchester, his loyalty and affection as palpable as his success. Hurleen Dooa and Yola Khodja fresh from their first year at university taking to the stage in their old choir. After meeting each other and enjoying their canapés, we settled down to bask in the reflected glory of young people chosen by teachers. The choir sang, their repertoire including Byrd's *Avē Verum Corpus*

and the most glorious rendition of C. V. Stanford's, *The Blue Bird*. Their voices once again lifted our spirits and touched our souls. As ever, Colin Hall, made us laugh, his self-deprecating humour reminding us that we should not be deceived ever by the trappings of position but typically he mixed this skill with moving us, reminding us of all that is human, fallible, vulnerable, frail and needy, even on an occasion that celebrates those who are triumphant. In that celebration of the great and good he nodded to the responsibility that being singled out brings and with his so typical sensitivity, and without betraying personal details or confidences, he delineated portraits of some award winners that celebrated their quietude, their sensitivity, their struggles on the road to being honoured. Tabby and Josh Cole came from Rye to see small Rye Pottery bowls made by them presented as awards this year; a year in which every student in school was given an editioned mug. It was a pleasure to introduce them to Edward Tadros who designed and manufactured the school's furniture, and wonderful that such people are interested in collaborating with the school. Alongside a beautiful little bowl went the four silver cups and bowls. The Nicholas Robson cup to Stella Giulianini in recognition of music. The Elizabeth Rutherford cup to Gelilla Kassaye, the Melinda Libby bowl to Rae Tarbox, and the Head's bowl to Nadia Mahmoud, in recognition of her illustrious school career. As the light dimmed and the last applause fell silent one could only feel that the world belongs to the young but particularly to the young who embrace the wisdom and experience of those who have already lived a life. We trust all will look after those little Rye bowls as a reminder of a moment of greatness gained in a school that thinks and hopes that everyone has their moment – just not, necessarily, at the same time.

MR JOE HOLLOWAY
SENDCO and DEPUTY HEAD



ONE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

From lobster robots to cats in space, the first ever Royal Academy Young Artists' Summer Show is filled with inspiring artworks by talented young artists from the UK and beyond. So reads the introduction to the RA's website. They are rightly excited by this new venture into the promotion of young artists. The work on display was selected from over 6200 submissions and visitors to the exhibition are promised an extravaganza of drawing, painting, photography, sculpture and video in the 329 artworks in this online exhibition. We were delighted to receive news that Amy Daja's submission (above), titled *Immigrants*, was one of the few to be selected. Amy is currently in Year 12 and studying for her A level in art. This captivating piece of work was inspired by the theme, decompose. The work

focuses on her family's personal story, which she describes, 'My parents are immigrants from Albania who lived through the rise and fall of the communist Soviet Union. My sculpture is a representation of my parents' hardships, escaping war and migrating to an unfamiliar Western country. I wanted to capture their excitement and anxiety when leaving everything they had known to find a safe home. The 'feet' were made by filling the negative space of the shoe with expanding foam. Each ragged shoe has a unique imprint inside and the red string is representative of the blood of my parents drawn away from their homeland. The feet hang inside a cage, this reflective of the mental barrier created by the country's government, as it sought to preventing my parents from leaving.'

MS OLIVIA BURLEY
TEACHER OF ART



AND ONE IN THE SAATCHI GALLERY

This has been a bumper term for the celebration of our students' artistic endeavours and talents. Our gallery has played host to exhibitions by our A level art students, our GCSE art students, our GCSE aptitude students. In each instance the quality and originality of work has been highly commended by the numerous visitors that have taken time to view the work. To realise this, Ms Burley and Ms Mackie could be found most evenings, ensconced in the gallery, frequently sweltering in soaring summer temperatures, curating (and debating) to ensure that every student's artwork was presented in the very best possible 'light'. It has been a stellar effort and testimony to their passion to ensure that art in the school maintains its high, and well deserved, profile. When Ms Burley introduced photography two years ago, we did not anticipate how popular the course would become amongst students - getting a place on the option course is a seriously competitive affair, requiring some students to

book their seat a year in advance (with portfolios to prove their talent). Nor did we anticipate quite how diverse and exciting the students' work would be. So it made sense when BAFTA award winning artist Alison Jackson launched a community minded photography competition for aspiring photographers living in Kensington and Chelsea, that Ms Burley encourage her young photographers to enter. Jackson's aim was to celebrate, inspire and nurture local talent, and offer an unmissable opportunity for gifted individuals - many of whom may not have had the chance to showcase their talent before - to hone their craft and take inspiration from the local community around them, with a special category dedicated to Grenfell. We were recently delighted to learn that Tylo Summerfield (year 10) was awarded third prize in the highly sought after 13-18 category. Tylo's work is now on show in the Saatchi Gallery.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD

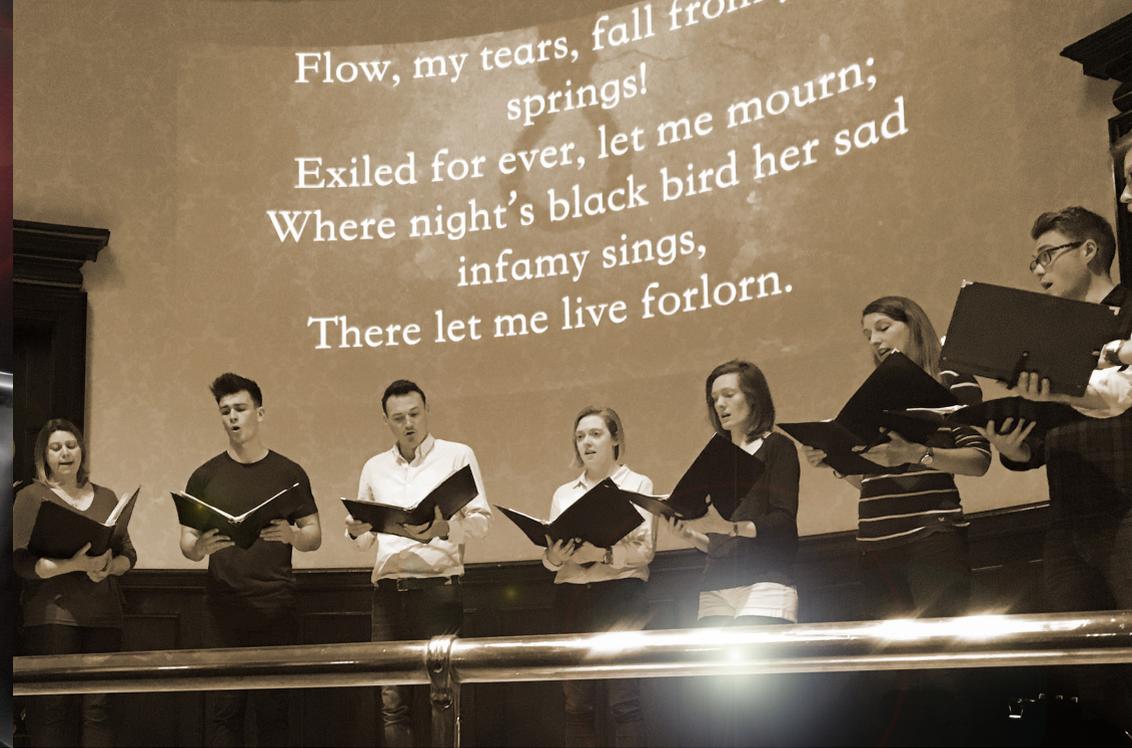


THE KATHARINE KENT CONCERT

Ms Chapman's annual concert is now a well established tradition of excellence at this tour de force of the school's musical calendar. But some of the numbers on show this year were beyond all that anyone could reasonably expect, even given three or four years now of undisputed quality. Joshua Greenslade's performance of Chopin was spellbinding. There is with professional pianists, such a sense of pace and timing, of placement and sensitivity, that it seems the world has stopped and the timelessness of the music becomes all enveloping. For someone as young as Joshua (a student in his first year with us) to have caught a glimpse of this musical mastery was nothing but inspiring. There may be something in the aphorism that musicians are born and not made: his command of the stage, his unwillingness to be rushed or hastened was something few trained adults display in performance and this, alongside his faultless accuracy and delicate sense of musical line, made this an exquisite highlight of the evening's proceedings. Again, this was a year of some highly talented solo performers: violinists, clarinetists, and singers, flourished under the spotlight. New to the solo circuit, Sophia Tsimaris

and Lizaveta Kirkizh; both gave heartfelt and skilful renditions of music from 20th century and beyond. Performances from well-established performers continued to delight and excite. Again, this was a year in which ensemble matched solo artists for quality and excitement. Mr Kramer's new group, *Vocal Point*, who specialises in renditions of Musical numbers, gave a tantalisingly funny (and choreographed) performance of Matilda's *School Song*. The orchestra were in fine form, as were Mr Robson's choir, treating us to samples of their new repertoire that stretched from the classic to the comic. Perhaps this year for the first time, the concert was awash with material. Our tradition of running a 'dress rehearsal' at 16.00 before the doors are open to the public and to parents, has never before necessitated editorial extraction, but even the music missing from the final performance deserved some air time and it is a good thing that Ms Chapman's *Live from Holland Park* continues to feature the great depth of musical talent across the ages.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD



LET THE MUSIC PLAY ON

Songs of Longing and of Exile is a new programme from Stile Antico following the publication of their recent album *In a Strange Land*. And Holland Park Choir were treated to an exclusive private workshop in the hallowed concert venue of the Wigmore Hall to hear a preview of the evening's concert, to listen to the music from the group - and from the Oud player Rihab Azar - and a commentary on music and the group's history. The poet Peter Oswald, writing the lyrics for John Dowland's instrumental pavans, the *Lacrimae*, captured the essence of Syrian refugees' experience in his text, whilst Dowland's exquisite melancholy formed an astonishing and transcendental counterpart. The group also performed a newly commissioned work by Giles Swayne, an angular, passionate cry in which the dissonance and discord of the full choir are matched against the lyrical and delicate line of the Oud. It was an astonishing hour of bliss, of stunning musicianship and masterful accompanying commentary. It was rumoured, and proved to be true, that Mr Hall truanted his study to join the choir, taking five minutes in Margaret Howell (source of the original idea for a piece of Rye pottery) next door to The Wigmore Hall. The truancy is known to Mr Chappell! Before that fabulous experience with Stile Antico, the

choir were put to work in our local, and beautiful, St George's Church for our annual involvement in the Festival Concert, alongside the St George's Festival Chorus and Organ. *Travels in London and Paris* was a fascinating exploration from Tudor England, romantic France and the present day. The choir's new work (a result of their time in Florence on tour) *Lay a Garland* is a sumptuous eight-parter of interweaving, interacting vocal lines - gloriously mournful and charmingly melancholic. Written by Robert Lucas de Pearsall, it is very much a retrospective, looking back at the exquisite music of the renaissance (as exemplified by Stile Antico), and using some unfamiliar harmonic shifts to re-imagine how such music might have sounded. Alongside some of our more well known numbers, the choir also joined the Festival Chorus for our inaugural joint-performance for Cesar Franck's ambrosial *Panis Angelicus*. It was, as it always is, superbly attended: a highlight of the choir's season. Many thanks are due to parents and staff for their supporting attendance.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
ASSOCIATE HEAD



WORKING IN LEIGHTON HOUSE

Since January, students in 84x have been taking their learning outside the classroom and participating in a 'Work Experience Programme' in conjunction with Leighton House Museum in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Students are based at the museum one afternoon per week and work closely with the staff undertaking a variety of vocational based tasks ranging from front of house tour guides, running marketing campaigns, curation and conservation, landscape gardening, and various art & photography workshops. The impetus behind the programme is to build a creative curriculum drawing from all subjects for a broader sense of cross curricular learning. In addition, the students develop core life skills which will equip them for employment opportunities in the future. Applying the following skills in a real life setting is invaluable: the students have enhanced their ability to work as a team; prioritise workload; problem solve; develop time management; and enhance their presentation skills. Being considered reliable, hardworking, young adults within an unfamiliar environment, has done wonders for their self-esteem, resilience and confidence. The museum's Learning Officer, Charlotte Villiers, commented that what has made

the programme particularly unique and impactful is that, over time, the students have become embedded in the museum team, genuinely contributing and making a difference to the work of the museum, whilst having opportunity to develop their knowledge and competencies. Charlotte said, "*It has been a pleasure to work with the students of Holland Park School, they bring such energy, enthusiasm, ideas and insight, and have made an invaluable contribution to the museum. We have also been very pleased by the response of our visiting public, who have universally commented on the students in the museum as a positive presence and force for good.*" The programme has generated a high degree of external interest and the students' 'Graduation' ceremony will be attended by the Royal Borough's Mayor and his Deputy. Owing to its success, Holland Park and Leighton House will continue to offer this valuable experience to a new cohort of students, in the coming academic year.

**MS MAXINE EMERSON
LEADING PRACTITIONER**

THE GREAT OUTDOORS AND UNRELENTING DOWNPOURS

With over 95% of all 1400 students taking part in Beyond 3pm activity this academic year, this has been our finest year for extra-curricular on record. Many new clubs have flourished - Film Club is one such activity, led by Ms Lara Agnew. A number of the well established societies have maintained and indeed grown their numbers, most notably, *Made in Holland Park*, the student-run magazine, and *Tales and Translations*, the literary foreign language group. Music and sport have boasted record breaking attendance (with over 1500 separate attendances at choir since September) and expansion to Saturday sport and our 4pm to 5pm weekday slots, have been very popular indeed. We will continue to build on this most stable of bases for the coming year and feel very excited about extra curricular being such an area of pride for the school. And our adventures continue well beyond the school gates. Sore ankles, wet socks, uneven tans and exercise to the point of exhaustion, this

year's Duke of Edinburgh expeditions have been a great joy to witness - if from the safety of the sidelines! Touring the length and breadth of the country (our Gold Expeditioners have gone all the way to the Lake District), our weekend (or, in the case of Gold, full-week) wanderers have enjoyed soaring temperatures on the hottest days of the year, and unrelenting downpours. They have weathered all meteorological madness. And who says that the children of today are part of the snowflake generation? Our success rate, from those who start Duke of Edinburgh, is set to rise enormously this year under the careful leadership of the formidable Mr Ian McClland, together with Ms Rhian Davies and Mr Mark Matthews. A tough selection process has helped (students have to evidence their contribution to extra-curricular where places are in demand), but it is the endurance of students and the tenacity of teachers that really should be celebrated!

**MR ROBERT ORR
DEPUTY HEAD**



ON STAGE AND SILVER SCREEN

One of the most surprising things about an encounter with the leading lights of stage and film is realising that, instead of being overawed, one is enchanted and charmed by the kindness and humility of these extraordinary personalities. And so it was with both Sir Simon Russell Beale and Noel Clarke. Both actors, both in their own ways entirely different in their audiences and output, and yet when talking with an audience of school students and staff, both similarly endeared and delighted their audiences with tales of their big breaks, the people who inspired them and the mistakes they made along the way. If these two greats of stage and screen differ in form (Simon Russell Beale is best known for his Shakespearean performances on stage; Noel Clarke is known primarily for his appearances on film and television), both are multi-talented, with a very wide range of performance skills that stretch far beyond the skills that have built their names. The school choir, with trepidation

and excitement, sang some Tudor renaissance works for Sir Simon, enjoying a small diversion in his talk to the joys of choral singing and the beauty of the English choral tradition. Spending some time also discussing his scholarly literary understanding, he opened up a world of academia and the joys of learning. Noel Clarke, similarly revealed his love of script writing, of comic book creation and directing and discussed the challenges and rewards of being involved in a market place dominated by a few big players and lots of innovative independent film makers. His experience on a Hollywood film set, as well as directing his very own trilogy of films, was a fascinating yarn! Both talks were astonishing in their range and charm, they entered exciting unknown worlds and gave us a taste of their exotic fruits.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
ASSOCIATE HEAD



SIR SIMON RUSSELL BEALE

He is the great figure of the English stage, dubbed the finest living Shakespearean actor by many and, beyond his thespian talents, could have been a successful academic and musician. So it was with much excitement that we welcomed Sir Simon Russell Beale to speak with some 150 students about his life, his art and his outlook on a late June morning. To open the event, the choir took the opportunity to sing some choral classics well represented in his BBC Four series, *Sacred Music: William Byrd's Ave Verum* and Thomas Tallis's *If Ye Love Me*. Having functioned as his warm-up act, Sir Simon spoke generously about the music. In his typically self-deprecating fashion, he saw a pre-prepared talk as of little interest to students (something we assured him was not at all true). And so, fielding questions diverse (and at times difficult) he held the audience enraptured with stories of his upbringing, his early career, perspectives on the state of the nation and the future of theatre. He balanced candour with diplomacy, wisdom with wit and depth with accessibility. There were questions about improvisation, memorising (and forgetting) lines and whether *Timon of Athens* has particular resonance in our current misanthropic

world. Students of *Lear* pressed him on the world's current preoccupation with issues of mental health; students of *The Tempest* on Prospero's cruelty to Ariel. There were tales about his schooling, the death of his sister in infancy, farce and fiasco on stage and set. All was delivered with a deep sense of humanity, generosity and good humour. Being in the presence of such greatness, such a talented and charismatic performer, was thrilling for those gathered. It was equally moving to observe some of our students, Ivor Elias, for example, absorb the sophistication of the talk in a profoundly mature way. Freddie Bercow gave a stunning impromptu thank you speech and offered a token of the school's appreciation - a limited edition 60th anniversary mug, designed and manufactured by Rye Pottery. Shortly after his photo shoot with Mr Chappell, he made his way to the Piccadilly Theatre for the current five star run of the *Lehman Trilogy* and school sends him our warmest appreciation and thanks.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
ASSOCIATE HEAD



STICKS AND STONES

Nothing ever goes to plan... or so it would seem in the world of building development. And so I am required to report that we won't be enjoying our new school entrance and art studio quite as soon as planned. This means for the autumn term, our entrance to school will remain on Campden Hill. Two hundred (plus) year old buildings have a tendency to reveal the unexpected, as so it has been with the wonderful Thorpe Lodge. Where there should have been supporting lintels - there weren't; where there shouldn't have been asbestos - there was; and so on and so forth. However, good progress is now being made. The extended entrance is looking beautiful and fitting of the building's era; the galley is taking shape and apposite of the building's evolution. Highly skilled 'french polishers' have scrapped away layer upon layer of dirty brown varnish to reveal the most beautiful of woods, sourced a century ago from

across the globe by Sir Montagu Norman, and now restored to their original beauty. Fireplaces have been rediscovered, including the Medici period centre piece in Norman's music room. A new (eco) AGA will find its way back into its predecessor's original resting place in the kitchen. The windows open once again and have been stripped of their grey paint bindings to reveal once again their (last forever) hardwood construction. The toilets are refurbished, the wiring and heating systems are replaced. The net result will be the imminent rebirth of this historic and beautiful building - fit for purposeful enjoyment by our staff and students. Mr Hall suggested I dust down my art teacher hat and produce an inaugural exhibition in the newly erected gallery. We'll see!

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD

RADIO ONE

Playing host to some of the world's biggest music stars across the ages, from *The Beatles* to *Led Zeppelin*, *Radiohead* and *Jay-Z*, the BBC's Maida Vale studios hold a very special place in the musical history of the twentieth and twenty first century. So it was a great privilege that, as part of the BBC's commitment to commemorating the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, we were able to send some students who themselves were affected by the fire, to take part in a live session marking the event. Making a connection with the producers has promised many more such experiences for our students and we hope to take advantage of its proximity before the historic buildings are closed in 2022.

DUCK EGG BLUE

It was an evening of sophisticated warmth. In a new venue, the BFI's Stephen St. Kitchen, year 13 gathered in their finery - though it was hard to better Mr Arnold's Issey Miyake jacket in duck egg blue! The impromptu speeches about teachers were a new feature and none was ore heart-warming that the effusive gratitude bestowed on Ms Shi for her exceptional work as a teacher of mathematics. Students led the vents and their kind words were a signal of their maturity. Hannah Condon and Hinda Shakkak were heard to speak profoundly with Mr Hall. What did we eat? Goodness, one doesn't remember; it was lovely but words and emotions were the real delight as a rite of passage came to a close at midnight.

DIVAS, DANCERS & DINERS

Every year Mr Wilson, our master (how long before that word is a crime?) of ceremonies gave his all (after hoodies and t-shirt signing) to mark the close of year 11. Yet again, we were in awe of our students' maturity and joy as we ate beautiful food and witnessed their sartorial efforts and energy. They fizzed with excitement and as on-lookers we could only delight in their well-deserved party post examinations.

FAR FROM HOME

And finally, we wish you a joyful and peaceful summer break. If you are planning a cinema visit, we can recommend the new *Spiderman* movie - worth watching just to see the school appear in its second Hollywood blockbuster!

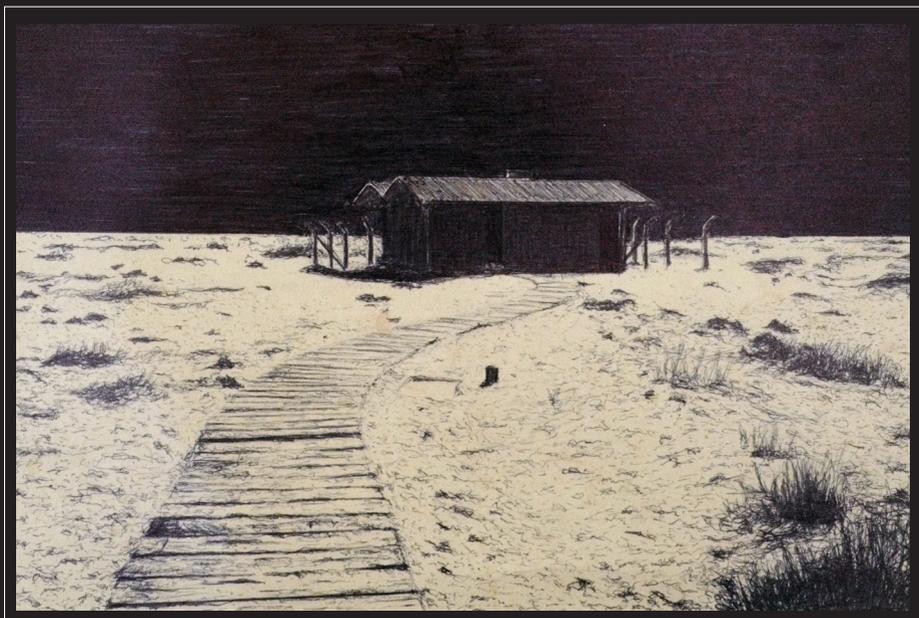
TWENTY

As we reach the conclusion of the school's sixtieth year, we would like to say thank you: to our staff; to our students; to our parents; to our governors; to friends of the school; and to the too many to mention visitors that travel the country to absorb all that goes to make Holland Park a truly exceptional school. Whilst it has been a splendid year in school, filled with celebration, this has been countered by some profound moments of sadness, and so we would like to recognise the exceptional resilience of some notable individuals and our community as a whole. At the end of each academic year, we look forward to the next; to new faces, to new opportunities and to new successes. This year (remarkably) marks the beginning of our twentieth year together in the school. There is something in the genetic make-up of the school that makes it compelling. And like all the years before it, the new academic year promises to be equally exciting. The autumn term will see us re-open Thorpe Lodge for its intended purpose when bequeathed to the school in 1958 - a place of learning and celebration. Our time capsule will go into its garden - to lie in wait until its retrieval in 2058. And after Rye Pottery comes Robert Thompson: to mark sixty, a solid oak lectern - good to last for the next century. It has been designed for the school and has its trademark mouse at its base. But before all that we wait in anticipation of our students' summer results. Those all important grades that will launch university careers and secure places in our sixth form.

COLIN HALL & DAVID CHAPPELL



Designed and produced by
HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL



Oliver Pereira-Adams, Year 13 | biro on paper | 2019