



SUMMER 2022 ISSUE 5

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot: HRH, The Duchess of Kent,
and right: Celia Birtwell.

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

EVERY now and again, one meets people who break the mould and who offer something extraordinary. What a delight it has been this year to welcome as a friend of the school: Katharine Kent. Still HRH, The Duchess of Kent, she has welcomed us as Katharine Kent. I grew up with a very clear image of the Duchess of Kent; that very gracious senior member of the Royal family, presenting a trophy each summer at Wimbledon. How very much more she is than merely that. Amongst her many charitable works she has taught music in a primary school, in a very impoverished part of Hull, for over a decade. Her passion for children is palpable and her highly developed understanding of the challenges presented to those less fortunate is so in tune with our own philosophy. I am delighted to report that she relishes an association with us and I regard it as a huge privilege. It is not merely her qualities as a teacher that are so inspiring, but the personal example she provides as someone with a profound spiritual dimension. In this busy, ambitious world, we are ever seeking for our children, adults whose lives demonstrate bravery, courage, wisdom, warmth and an understanding of the complexity of the human condition. We look forward to a long collaboration and in particular to her contribution to music in school which will culminate in 2015 with our Katharine Kent Concert. We were delighted to receive her as our guest of honour at Perfect Tense and the front cover photograph shows her enjoying our choir's performance. We welcome also another new friend of the school: Celia Birtwell (pictured below). An icon of the late 20th century, a much revered artist, designer and fashion leader, what a pleasure it has been to welcome her and to look forward to working with her. Like Katharine Kent, she is keen to come and work with students. A lifelong friend of the artist David Hockney, we look forward to a very profitable relationship with this new friend of the school. It is a great privilege to receive such warm and generous people to school and offer them to our students.

MR COLIN HALL, HEAD



Year 11 Celebration



TWO hundred and thirty students and staff united this May to celebrate the end of students' Year 11 with a wonderful ball in Marble Arch. The event was dominated by beautifully attired students: ornate ballgowns balanced by an array of ostentatious dinner suits. The students' charm and good humour certainly matched their apparel, as they enjoyed the experience of being a year group for the final time. The evening not only offered a delightful meal and some animated dancing from both staff and students alike, but also gave students a moment of reflection to recognise their achievements in their journey through Holland Park School. It also afforded the school an opportunity to thank students for their endeavours and to wish those not returning to the Sixth Form much success and contentment for the future.

MR ROSS WILSON, DEPUTY HEAD

Debate at Oxford



AS one might imagine, it is very rare to see Colin Hall nervous. I accompanied him with my colleague, Daniel Seed, to the Oxford Union, where he had been asked to debate the ills of private schooling. I sensed a trace of anxiety – and I was sure this was not only because of the eight-minute time limit! To settle the nerves, we were treated to a sumptuous afternoon tea with Dr Linda Kirk and Professor Richard Carwardine, President of Corpus Christi College, both friends of the school. After changing into our dinner jackets and joining the special guests to dinner, Colin took a tough line of argument to an implacable audience and some fierce

opposition. Nevertheless, he had no need to be nervous. His call to break the boundaries of segregation, to alleviate the constraints of financial disadvantage and to represent, in a single school, a social microcosm of the world, was emotionally compelling. A loss by only seven votes (in an environment dominated by students from private schools) was, in my view, really a victory. And, to be greeted by our alumna, Olivia Porter (Pembroke College), at the end was an additional joy. In sharing all the excitement of her first year at Oxford, she embodied Colin's argument in its fullest form!

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON,
DEPUTY HEAD

A FOND FAREWELL

MELINDA Libby retired from the school's governing body this July and Sir John Baker returned to give the school's warmest thanks. She has provided us all with a decade of unswerving support, dedication and guidance and has played a senior role in husbanding the school's resources and making senior appointments. She has given her time generously and we wish to express our gratitude for the many ways in which she has assisted and sustained us in our drive to become an outstanding school. Of course Melinda will continue to be a much valued friend of Holland Park School and we look forward to a long association with her.

MS AMANDA REDFEARN,
DEPUTY HEAD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR



"It has to be the Poetry by Heart competition and the string of A's in 10.1.1's examination results."

MS RACHEL OXTOBY, TEACHER OF ENGLISH



"Realising that my Year 7 netball team has won a staggering 19 out of 20 matches and two league titles."

MS KATHERINE BULLEN, TEACHER OF PE



"Being touched that one of my Year 8 students had learnt my lines for me for Hamlet."

MS ALEXANDRA PUGH, TEACHER OF ENGLISH

"Understanding fully that the second year in a school brings you a deep level of satisfaction and enjoying being deeply attached. Perhaps that is why I have felt so humbled by my students' desire to impress and discuss our work. I feel really proud."

MR ALEX SEAL, TEACHER OF HUMANITIES



"Sharing Year 7 students' enthusiasm for studying Shakespeare and learning Hamlet's soliloquies off by heart. I have marvelled at how students have taken such delight in unpicking the complexities of the English language."

MS EMILY BARBER, TEACHER OF ENGLISH

This above all: to thine own self be true

KEY Stage 3 students this half term have had five weeks immersed in the study of *Hamlet*. Using 'Shakespeare Reinvented', the staff charity production of *Hamlet* as inspiration, students have explored the contrasting interpretations of the protagonist, Hamlet. Images from the staff production have been used to secure students' understanding of plot and character and provided many moments of delight. This, coupled with regular visits from members of the English

department and Leadership team in character in order to perform extracts or be interrogated by the class, has left students with a detailed understanding of this challenging play. In the final week of term students produced an extended piece of writing with the title 'How do you respond to the character of Hamlet?', with their responses demonstrating a perceptive understanding of the complex nature of the protagonist.

MR JAMES THOM, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



CREATIVE PAUSE FORTHOUGHT

WE continue to be very proud of our association with First Story, the national organisation with responsibility for developing young novelists and poets. Students are eagerly anticipating the launch of *Ellipsis* this July, an anthology of the work produced this year. This is the inspiring result of six months of creative endeavour with the renowned author Frances Wilson. The two-hour weekly sessions have seen students reflect on their own experiences, try their hands at parodies, dramatic dialogues, fan fiction and poetry. Their commitment

to refining first drafts and the persistence and skill of Frances Wilson has resulted in some stunning work from a range of year groups, with some familiar First Story faces being joined by a new generation of talented writers. With titles as diverse as 'Love of the Moon', '9/11' and 'My Tortured Life as a Pencil', the launch will be an excellent opportunity for students to present their final work to an audience. Friends and family will be very welcome to come and celebrate their achievements.

MR JAMES THOM, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER 5

CELEBRATING THE EXCEPTIONAL

ON a sunny Thursday evening, following an exquisite reception in our newly opened and renovated Thorpe Gardens, a vibrant Mr Hall hosted our 14th annual celebration of student success, Perfect Tense. In attendance were some of our beloved alumni including the well-established actress Bel Powley, artist Lucy Letherland and current Oxford scholar Hibba Mazhary, who won the Melinda Libby cup last year. In addition to former students the event was graced by a wide range of friends of the school, amongst whom were Lucy and Ellie Colenso, the daughter and grand-daughter of Mary Nelves; Christopher Buckmaster, the former Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; the designer, Celia Birtwell; and our special guest Katharine Kent. Of course our most highly esteemed guests were our dinner-suited students and their ultra-proud parents. The hall was, as it always is, adorned to create a special atmosphere for all students and parents to celebrate their outstanding achievements. During the summer term, teachers nominated students whom they considered to be exceptional. Consideration was given to a wide range of attributes, including manners, charm, courage, selflessness, endeavour and determination to be successful, not simply academic attainment. In addition to the House awards, which were presented for the first time last year, a number of other awards, named after friends of the school, were given to individual students. Our talented artists Sarah Bagheri and Phoebe Ingleby won the Mary Nelves and Celia Birtwell awards respectively. George Crafer was the recipient of the

Simon Griffiths award for his reputation as an all-round renaissance man. In addition to being widely nominated by his teachers, Jonah McLeod won the Katharine Kent award. Delighted, he commented: "Receiving such positive feedback from my teachers means a great deal to me. Despite three successive years of nominations for Perfect Tense awards, this particular prize is a great honour. I am thrilled!" Punte-a Hosseini added: "Such thoughtful and generous comments from my teachers and members of the Leadership Team is a real privilege. That teachers take such care and time to recognise students' achievements is further evidence of why Holland Park is a truly outstanding school to attend." Oke Omoniyi, who was awarded the Seeley House prize, and was nominated by all of his teachers, was also effusive in his praise for his teachers: "One simply could not ask for a better tutor than Ms Smith. She has not only given me detailed guidance with my application to read law at university but her tutor group is always a haven of lively debate: a brilliant way to begin one's morning. Equally, studying the history of Britain with Ms Wallace has been an enthralling journey into the past. I know that the memories and knowledge that I have gained from her lessons will last a lifetime." In addition to his excessive language, Oke also demonstrated his exceptional dedication by changing his holiday flights to arrive within minutes for the opening of the evening. He joined 20 other singers to open the evening with works by U2, Billy Joel and William Byrd.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

Ahmed Abdelaziz, John Abreu, Zoveen Ahmed, Sarah Bagheri, Jack Bannister, Hana Batto, Sarah Batto, Hassa Benfellahi, Helena Carone Wheatley, Sapphire Conran, George Crafer, Amy Daja, Josie Dixey Watson, Harper Doyle, Josephine Drew, Amelia Edgell-Cole, Fabrizio Eramo, Abdelmaoujoud Es-Serghyny-Elhafy, Chelsea Evans, Jennifer Ferreira, Ruby Freeman, Rita Galica, Star Gaze, Lazar Gojkovic, Cristina Gomez Gomez De La Torre, Todd Grant, Konstantin Gusov, Tom Harris, Ellie Holm Slack, Archie Holm Slack, Punte-A Hosseini, Babak Ibbetson, Nerea Idigoras, Phoebe Ingleby, Hamish Iyer, Anita Iyer, Jennifer Jimenez Cruz, Chater Jordan, Dea Jusufi, Hassan Kah-Halake, Karolina Kalinayova, Neno Kreso, Dan Kreso, Anna Kwafo, Roosa Laine, Flora Li, Rosie Lloyd-Reed, Carmen Lopez, Jonah McLeod, Maya Morales-McDermott, Chau Nguyen, Victor Odujo, Alice Offenbach, George Offenbach, Oke Omoniyi, Matt Parker, Monica Petrovic, Aria Poshteh, Cassius Rathbone, Cai Rees Manuel, Ariel Rosario, Omar Sabbagh, Luca Settecasi, Lucia Shakespeare, Violet Smart, Imad Sofrani, Sophia Staffiero, Maya Tapper, Griffin Tory, Felix Tory, Shivam Varma Perez, Akesh Velappan, Florent Venhari, Ivy Webb, Onosiokhue Yakubu.





Sublime summer of sport

THE summer sunshine has brought with it much success for our sports teams. The Under 12 rounders teams have been powered to success by outstanding performances from Emily Surminski who scored a total of 15 rounders in five games. Over 40 students from Years 7-9 competed in a local athletics festival at Willesden Sports Centre and Onosiokhue Yakubu won several titles including winning the 100 metres in 14.4 seconds. Fazle Chowdhury has chalked up some stunning statistics for the Under 12 boys cricket team including taking four wickets in one over whilst Ujebien Osmani and Zaki Hurst established a formidable partnership in the Under 13 boys victory over The London Oratory School. We had an honourable defeat at Ampleforth College on their stunning cricket pitch.

Philip Dimitrijevic has proved himself to be a most capable sportsman with match winning displays as an all-rounder for the Under 14 boys cricket team and partnering Jack Bannister to victory in the tennis leagues. Alice Offenbach starred for the Year 7 netball team who won Pimlico league and the Westminster League. The Under 15 Boys' football team were victorious in the 'Plate' final against Burlington Danes at Queens Park Rangers FC Harlington training ground complex with Dion Morina scoring and being awarded the man of the match prize ahead of penalty shoot-out hero Menaf Al Nasir. Our sporting year culminated with the Sports Tea awards afternoon where there was an inspirational talk from paralympian Tim Prendergast.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD



A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

THIS year has been an exciting one for students who have chosen to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Nearly 140 students, who are nearing the end of their Bronze, Silver or Gold awards, completed the expedition phase of the award during the Summer Term. Students undertook their practice expeditions in the South Downs and, during the May half-term, our Sixth Form students travelled to Snowdonia to complete their Gold award. This was a significant milestone, as they were required to plan their route, navigate through difficult terrain and learn camp craft, including cooking their own meals. Of

course, the expeditions are only one part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and students have been undertaking a wide range of volunteering activities including helping at homes for the elderly and collecting money for charity. The whole year has been led and supported by Mr Alex Seal and Mr Richard Ball who, along with other staff, have given generously of their weekends to gain these prestigious awards for students. Apart from being an exciting and valuable experience, these awards will be excellent for students' future applications for university and employment.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

FRIENDS of the school, students and parents eagerly gathered in June to catch the first glimpse of the endeavours of the A2 Art students, Olivia Price and Matilda Wickham. Their work, which has been orchestrated and guided by David Chappell, left visitors stunned and inspired in equal measure: a testament to their commitment and talent. Mr Chappell has been persuaded to teach an AS level Art group next year. Too self-deprecating to write it himself, it will be an extraordinary experience for students. To be able to share such work with renowned figures such as Celia Birtwell, who is

now a friend of the school, was a real privilege. The AS students' exhibition, led by Ms Susanna Davies, provided a diverse and exciting glimpse into their year. A range of work from Amalie Dixey Watson, Aziza Popal, Sarah Scheuer and Jakob Staff again demonstrated their exciting potential as maturing artists. To conclude another successful year in Art and Design, GCSE students had the opportunity to share their varied and stimulating work in the Summer Art Exhibition.

MR GREG SMITH, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



A ROBUST DESIGN STRATEGY

A LARGE group of A level Design students have had an excellent year and their work was exhibited in July. With an array of projects to enjoy, it was clear that they had a common theme. The projects all explored social, moral and ethical issues through design. As ever, our excellent computer facilities have aided students, enabling them to realise complex and intricate working parts for the production of fully functional prototypes. In particular, Violet Smart's water transportation unit, which sought to improve the standard of water supply in developing countries at a low cost, was a standout piece and an innovative realisation of the brief.

MR GREG SMITH, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



Choral celebration

IN addition to my responsibilities as Deputy Head and leading our wonderful Sixth Form students, my role in running the school choir feeds my soul! And what an extraordinary year we have had. Our private performance for Katharine Kent was particularly memorable, not least because it was our final performance before Year 11 students (Nerea Idigoras, Jennifer Jeminez-Cruz, Maureen Martisano, Sara Chalise, Brylle Perez and Esin Kart) left us to study for their final GCSE examinations. We are excited about this link and what our connection with her charity, Future Talent (which supports young musicians whose talents might otherwise be unacknowledged) might mean for the future. Since that date, our performance of Henry Purcell's great choral work, *Come Ye Sons of Art* with instrumentalists from the Royal College and local singers, was a wonderful experience for Violet Smart and Ellie MacCarthy, both of whom sailed to the top notes with their youthful vocal range. The orchestra was magnificent; for our students, performing with them was a rare musical apprenticeship. We are also deeply grateful for the money the concert raised for ongoing musical projects at Holland Park. Capping this off, we performed at Perfect Tense a wide range of music from many traditions: William Byrd's *Mass for 3 Voices*, Palestrina's renaissance classic motet *Sicut Cervus* and choral arrangements of U2's *With or Without You* and Billy Joel's *Lullaby*. The work is barely finished, though, before we make preparations for our tour to Paris in November – we are excited to recruit further teachers (who sing alongside our students) particularly in the tenor and bass range – there is a campaign to headhunt Mr Richard Ball for the forthcoming year!

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, DEPUTY HEAD

CREATIVE COLLABORATION

WE are delighted to continue and extend our link with the English National Opera. This summer, they will be making use of our facilities to rehearse a production due to be staged later this year. It is wonderful to be able to offer something back to the ENO after the stunning day of music they offered our students in school last year.

MR SIMON DOBSON,
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Community friendships

OUR dear friends from the St George's Lunch Club visited on 15th of May for their first visit to the new school and were treated to an extraordinary school dinner. The diners' menu comprised of an oak smoked salmon starter, a delicious cassoulet au poulet, and finally, a selection of forest berries and ice cream for dessert. As they dined, the 40 members of the lunch club were serenaded with beautiful performances from two of Year 7's musical prodigies: Luca Settescasi and Lucia Shakespeare. It was a delight to spend such a cheerful couple of hours with many of our neighbours; the conversation and laughter flowed throughout and even a thunderous downpour at departure time could not dampen spirits.

MR MICHAEL CROW, DEPUTY HEAD

NORTHERN CORRESPONDENCE

OUR House system is beginning to bloom. The Houses, as parents will know, are named after people whose lives, achievements and dispositions are considered by the school to be worthy and noble virtues that epitomise the philosophy of the school. Year 12 student Violet Smart has taken a particular interest in the life of Jean Anderson, whose name has been chosen to represent her House and has been in correspondence with her this year. Violet has briefed Miss Anderson on events that have taken place in school, and has sought her advice regarding the University of Durham, which is Miss Anderson's home city.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

'DASHING AND BEAUTIFUL'

THE evening of the Sixth Form Dinner is by no means characterised by ordinariness. The dress code, "dashing and beautiful", epitomises the flavour of the event: it is a moment to celebrate the coming of age, the point of adulthood, the end of schooling – perhaps even the release of responsibility! – a moment that could not be celebrated casually. With the vast majority of teachers attending, very few students are willing to be without a ticket: some of whom have been saving for weeks to pay for it. At the time of writing, we await the wistful reminiscences and musings of the future with excitement and we look forward to wishing students, many of whom have been with us for seven years, the very best for their university careers.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, DEPUTY HEAD

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