



AUTUMN 2013 ISSUE 3

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot and right: Simon Armitage.

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been accomplished in what has been, as ever, an industrious and demanding term. Listening to this term's 'friend of the school', Simon Armitage, I was taken particularly with a phrase, an idea of his. He said our words go on reverberating long after we have spoken them, in ways we cannot or do not know about. How true. Some of the words that teachers speak can transform a day for a young person. They are not necessarily about knowledge; they are frequently the ones that can create confidence. Words empower people; it is why we regard English as such a vital part of the school. A particularly enjoyable part of the term for me was a three-week spell teaching Year 7 – it was good for me to be reminded of the demands and rewards of the classroom. On Fridays we have been hosting school leaders from around the country. This has given them an insight into how and why we are right at the top of all the performance tables, and it has been rewarding to hear their words of admiration and envy. There has been much to show them.

MR COLIN HALL, HEAD



A breathtaking environment



THE rebuild project, which has been part of my daily work for almost a decade, draws to a close at the end of this term. The construction team have left and our exceptional outdoor facilities are now finished and ready for students to enjoy. For outdoor Physical Education lessons, students now benefit from a multi-surface games area (MUGA), an AstroTurf pitch, a basketball court and tennis courts. Landscaping to the front and back of the school

provides quiet 'woodland' areas, which are brilliant for relaxing and reading. We are also completing work to Thorpe Lodge garden, restoring it to its original 1906 configuration; students may soon spot fish in the pond! Our next major project is Thorpe Lodge itself; Grade 2 listed and in need of much restoration and repair. We can all be rightly proud of our new school and its incredible facilities. Staff and students alike are fortunate to teach and learn in such a beautiful new environment.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL,
ASSOCIATE HEAD

Simon Armitage visits Holland Park

ONCE again, we were privileged to host the poet, writer and broadcaster Simon Armitage this term. Simon is undoubtedly one of the most popular and widely known UK poets of his generation – his work having been regularly anthologised and broadcast on both radio and television. During his visit, A level English students took part in a creative writing class, after which Simon read a selection of his poetry in front of an audience of some 200 students and teachers. It was wonderful to welcome such a distinguished and accomplished friend of the school.

MS AMANDA REDFEARN,
DEPUTY HEAD

Poetry by heart

THE school Library staged the initial round of the national Poetry by Heart competition in November. Choosing from the *Poetry by Heart* anthology (a collection encapsulating approximately 1,000 years of writing), students had to memorise and recite one poem published before 1914 and one published after 1914. Students selected from poets as diverse as John Milton, Arthur Hugh Clough, Allen Ginsberg and Simon Armitage, and presented their chosen poems with passion, aplomb and jaw-dropping accuracy. We are delighted to announce the winner, Nishat Uddin, Year 10, who will progress to the county level competition in the new year. Archie Redford, Year 12, was a very worthy runner-up in the competition.

MS MARISSA GISBOURNE AND MR JAMES CURTIS,
SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

'GOAL GETTERS'

THE 'Goal Getter' coaching education programme, generously funded by the Holland Park Trust, combines students' love for football and additional classroom study sessions. These are aimed at recognising, rewarding and supporting students aged 14 and over who are interested in getting involved in leadership and volunteering in football, using their academic studies as a vehicle to support their development. The programme also provides students with support and guidance, with the aim

of diverting young people away from antisocial behaviour, as well as enabling young people to freely discuss challenging issues, which affect their personal health and safety. Through the 'Goal Getter' coaching education programme, students will gain valuable experience and develop skills that can be applied to all walks of life beyond the classroom. Young Leaders can also track their volunteer hours and obtain rewards.

MR LUKE FULLER,
LEADER OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Duke of Edinburgh's Award

THE launch of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award this year by Richard Ball and Alex Seal has created a great deal of excitement among students at Holland Park. More than 150 students have indicated that they are keen to achieve their Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Many who completed awards last year are also eager to progress to the next level. The Award enables students to develop a wide range of important skills including teamwork,

communication and decision-making, as well as endurance in the much-anticipated expeditions which are planned for the Summer Term. Students are assessed also by their participation in voluntary activities, often within the local community, and by developing their physical skills through a challenging practical activity. We look forward to hearing about our students' successes throughout the year.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

INSIGHT INTO LITERARY PRIZE

IN September, the school welcomed Man Booker Prize judge Natalie Haynes (pictured right) to an informal discussion with students, hosted by Deputy Head Amanda Redfeare. Natalie spoke about her own inspiring career as a writer, classicist and comedian, before discussing the books shortlisted for the UK's most prestigious literary prize. The Sixth Form Book Club, which had been shadowing the Award, found learning about the judging process particularly illuminating. Natalie also inspired many of our younger students to borrow books from this year's shortlist, and we look forward to welcoming her back to Holland Park next year.

MS MARISSA GISBOURNE AND MR JAMES CURTIS,
SCHOOL LIBRARIANS



ENO fans operatic flame



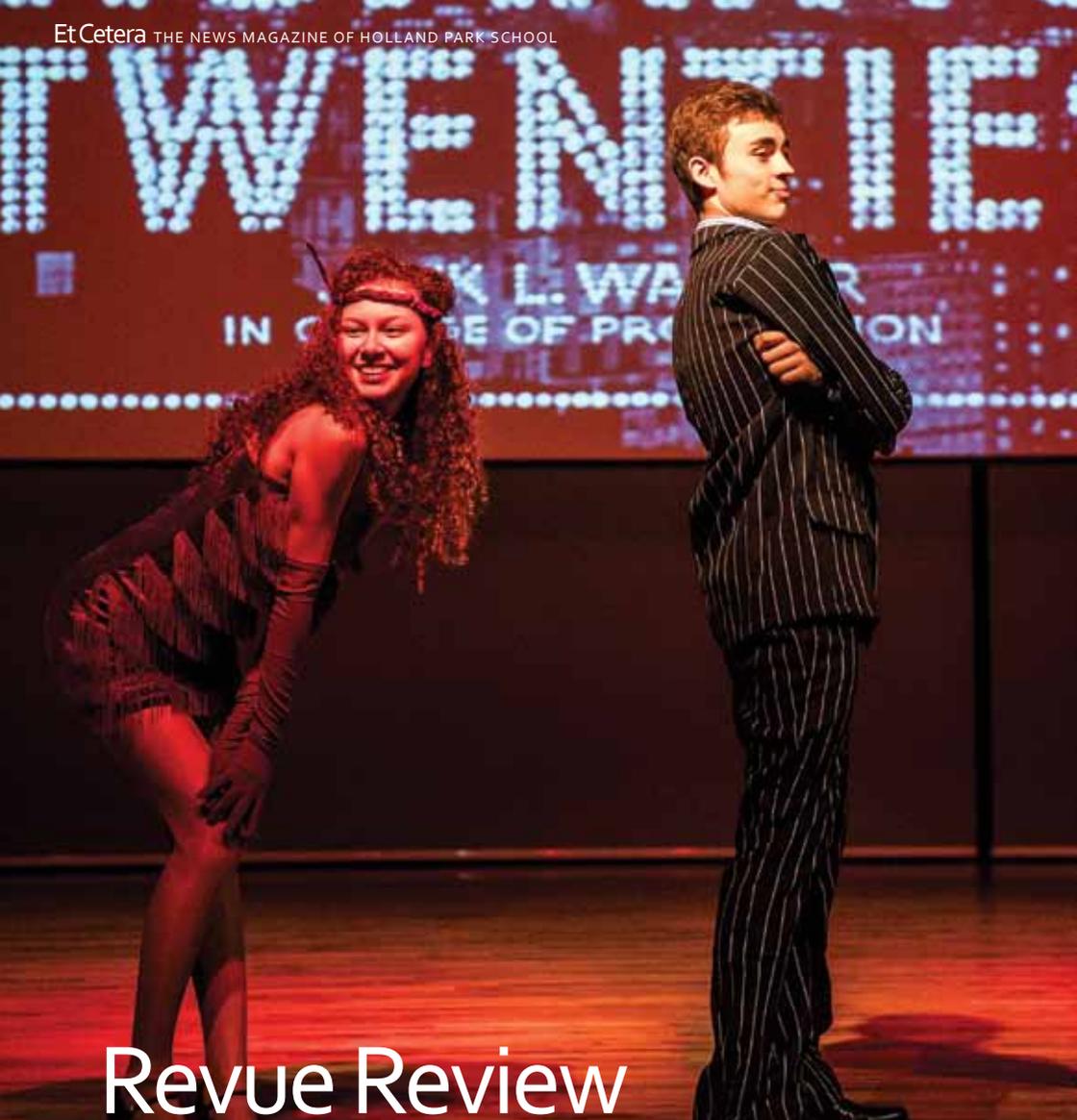
AS part of our ongoing partnership with English National Opera, students had the privilege in early October of enjoying ENO's current revival of *Madame Butterfly*. Staged at The London Coliseum, one of London's finest opera houses, the performance offered an unforgettable cultural first for several Year 7 students. For older students who attended the performance of *La Bohème* in April, this visit provided yet another experience within their operatic canon following ENO's performance of *The Magic Flute* in school last March. Students were mesmerised by the beautiful voices and stunning design, which embody the inimitable production values for which ENO is world renowned.

MR SIMON DOBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Shakespeare live

ENGLISH Literature A level students have been both enchanted and inspired by a variety of theatrical experiences in the first half term of this academic year. Year 13's final year of Literature study opened with a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon to watch Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Following in their footsteps, Year 12 began their studies of *All's Well That Ends Well* by watching an innovative version of the play. The term ended with a select group of star-performing students visiting the National on the evening of their 50th anniversary celebrations to watch Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*. Thanks to the Holland Park Trust, who have funded the majority of the costs, students have found such culturally enhancing experiences hugely enjoyable and rewarding.

MR JAMES THOM,
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER 5



Revue Review

EARLY December marked the performance of the first school production to be staged in our newschool. *Revue Review* encompassed key events from the 20th century, which were explored through Dance, Drama, Music, Poetry and Film. Elements of social history and popular culture combined in a powerful, emotive and entertaining spectacle that provided an opportunity to showcase the wide range of talent among our students, with some surprise guest appearances by members of staff. The performance also aimed to raise money for our

chosen school charity – The Royal Marsden hospital. Dreamt up on holiday last summer on a French beach, *Revue Review* became a reality and we were treated to a journey through the 20th century. World War 1 trenches, Dame Vera Lynn, Live Aid, the Coronation, Punk Rock, the Beatles, our own Dusty Springfield – it was all there. Over 100 students took part, their efforts co-ordinated and narrated by George Offenbach and Archie Holm-Slack. Pictured performing here are Leyla Saatova and George Crafer.

MR SIMON DOBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

EARLY GCSE SUCCESS

THE glory on results day was not confined to Year 11, after many younger students achieved the highest grades in GCSEs taken early. Chater Jordan and Cassius Rathbone both achieved A*s in Latin and RE at the end of Year 9. Chater said: "I chose Latin because I felt confident after all the support I had in Years 7 and 8. From the first RE lesson with Mr Robson, I knew I was going to love it. Cassius recalled opening his results in August: "At first, I couldn't believe it. I thought I had read the results slip incorrectly."

MR DANIEL SEED,
DEPUTY HEAD



Chater Jordan, Year 10.

LESSONS IN LATIN

THE study of Latin is well established at Holland Park. The subject continues to thrive after being a popular option choice for several years, with an impressive profile of results. Teacher of Latin Ms Camilla Gallop is keen to extend student participation, and now teaches an after-school class during the extended day. A level Latin students, meanwhile, are looking forward to seeing a production of *Medea* at Hammersmith's Riverside studios next March.

MR SIMON DOBSON,
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Rave results

THE 'dreaded' envelopes opened by our students on results day contained news of yet another record-breaking year for the school! Our A level results were the best achieved by the school, with nearly 40% of grades awarded at A or A*. This resulted in three of our Year 13 students gaining places at Oxford University. At GCSE, a number of students achieved ten or more A*s, while 35% of all grades were A or A* and 87% of students gained 5A*-C including English and Mathematics. We are particularly proud that 43% of students gained the Government's much-prized English Baccalaureate. This is awarded to students with GCSEs in English, Mathematics, Science, a Humanities subject and a Language. Ofsted's official analysis of our GCSE results places our school in the top 2% of schools nationally.

MR DANIEL SEED, DEPUTY HEAD

SIXTH FORM FOCUS

EXCELLENCE AT WORK

IT has been another magnificent year of A level results. Students who left our Sixth Form last summer achieved our best results on record. With 94% of grades at A*-C, 70% at A*-B and 37% at A*-A, we continued to increase the gap between us and the national average. The Government's Level 3 'Value Added' report of our examinations, which states that our Sixth Form students are performing significantly higher than expected, is also excellent news. This is particularly pleasing given the demanding entrance requirements we have of our students, whose GCSE grades far exceed the national average.

MAKING THE GRADE

STUDENTS entering the Sixth Form in Year 12 have the highest GCSE grades our Sixth Form has seen. Among them are two students with a string of A*s in each of their GCSE subjects. In fact, a quarter of our students in the first year of their Sixth Form A level courses all have GCSE grades at A and above.

PERIOD PERFORMANCE

ENGLISH Literature students started their course with a surprise performance of scenes from *Pride and Prejudice*. Immersing myself in the role of Mr Collins, I was joined by Mr James Thom as Darcy, Ms Alex Pugh as Jane and Ms Rachel Oxtoby as Elizabeth. Mr Colin Hall also gave a presentation on the 18th-century social context and the novel's reception, which was supported by seminars led by A level English teachers.



James Thom and Nicholas Robson in scenes for *Pride and Prejudice*.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, DEPUTY HEAD

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE HOPEFULS

OTHER students have also made applications and taken entrance tests for Oxbridge courses for entry in September 2014. This is followed by a rigorous interview process. Student Dan Kreso hopes to read Physics at Brasenose College, Oxford: "The admissions test went very well indeed." We wish him the best of luck.

2013'S STUDENTS STRIDE OFF TO UNIVERSITY

IN addition to our outstanding examination results, a substantial number of our students secured places at the highest performing universities, including Oxford. Olivia Porter is reading Sanskrit at Pembroke College, Chanaatjit Cheawsamoot has begun Biological Sciences at St Hilda's and Hibba Mazhary – who achieved four A*s at A level – is reading Geography at St Catherine's College. In total, more than half of our students began courses at Russell Group universities. These included Imperial College London, University College London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Warwick and King's College London.

'Show not tell'

WHAT matters most in a school is the quality of teaching. In our commitment to our students, we have undertaken a range of staff development training opportunities, entitled 'Show not tell'. This has involved teachers observing other teachers, including members of the Leadership Team, providing an opportunity for colleagues to learn from each other. As a result, more than 300 lessons have been observed this term. These have included Mr Hall teaching a Year 7 Band 4 English class. Afterwards, colleagues commented on the innovative and creative way in which Mr Hall approached teaching his class. Mr Hall is pictured here in full flow teaching *Kes* by Barry Hines to Year 7 students and Alex Pugh, during an observation by colleagues, with her A level English class.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD





Alumna illustrates flair for Art

AFTER visiting our new school last September, former Holland Park student Lucy Letherland was invited to become our Artist in Residence for the Autumn Term. Since graduating in 2011 with a First Class BA (Hons) from the Manchester School of Art, Lucy has been working as a freelance illustrator in London. Her first full-length book, *English for Au Pairs*, was published earlier this year. During her time with us, Lucy's main role involved working with our Art Aptitude students, which culminated in a wonderful exhibition of work at the end of November entitled *Child's Play*. Our thanks to Lucy for her time, and for sharing her talents with our students. Should you wish to look at further examples of Lucy's work, you can do so via her website lucyletherland.com

MR GREG SMITH, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

FRENCH TRIP PROVIDES FOOD FOR THOUGHT

DURING October half term, Year 9 students were given the opportunity to immerse themselves in the French language during a four-day visit to Normandy in France. Staying in a converted chateau, the students prepared to interview local residents and shopkeepers in the nearby town of St Malo. Cultural visits and outings included Mont St Michel and a medieval castle in the beautiful town of Fougères. The students also learnt how to make croissants and visited a market to buy ingredients for a lunchtime cookery competition.

MR SIMON DOBSON, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Leading Edge status

LEADING Edge is a national network for high-performing schools who are committed to working in partnership with schools across the country to raise achievement, innovation and sharing practice, both within their network of schools and beyond. As a result of our sustained high achievement, Holland Park School has been asked to be a part of this network. This is a reflection of the hard work of our staff and students. In November, we showcased our most outstanding features to Leading Edge Consultant Jenny Pick, who will be profiling our school through the network's national publication, *Leading Change*.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD

GOLD STANDARD RECOGNISED

THE school was delighted to be awarded the Investors in People (IIP) Gold Standard this term – a level gained by only 3% of organisations who take part. The process for accreditation involved: a thorough review of the school with the assessor; the opportunity for all colleagues to complete an in-depth questionnaire on their understanding and experience of key aims and standards, the school's ethos, personal and institutional development and leadership; and 1:1 interviews with colleagues, selected by the assessor Kevin Line, including leaders, managers, teachers and associate staff. This standard is awarded only when an institution demonstrates a 'focused commitment to the development and success of all staff, and a desire to continually improve and grow'.

MS AMANDA REDFEARN, DEPUTY HEAD

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