



SUMMER 2015 ISSUE 8

# Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

# Contents

PAGE 3

MUSIC TO OUR EARS  
Exquisite Music  
The Head and Shakespeare

PAGES 4 and 5

SUPERSTARS  
A Sophisticated End  
'...some of us are  
looking at the stars'

PAGES 6 and 7

ART AND DESIGN  
The Summer Exhibition  
A Private View

PAGES 8 and 9

ANNUAL CELEBRATION  
Perfect Tense

PAGES 10 and 11

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Cover shot:  
Bel Powley  
Actress, Alumna

## HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

*'We are such stuff as dreams are made on,' says Prospero in The Tempest and W.B. Yeats wrote 'But I, being poor, have only my dreams; I have spread my dreams under your feet. Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.'*

Such is the business of schools and in these times of targets, goals and results it is tempting to put to one side the delicacy and sensitivity of the work we do to nurture children into young adults. The summer term, with its huge pressures of public and school examinations is the epitome of our dual purpose: creating ambitious and successful young people who are also aware of their own and others' sensitivities. The eighth edition of Et Cetera is redolent with success: Bel Powley (2003 to 2010) one of our alumnae is an example of internationally acclaimed success, but she is also 'ours', part of our school family, someone we had the privilege to nurture. Bel's parents sent her to us when we had so little success with which to boast: pioneers, whose courageous choice of school helped launch us to the success we enjoy today. Looking at this year's AS Art exhibition (David Chappell's group of Year 10, 11 and 12 students) I believe I see some future artists of significant renown. This edition has layers of scholarship but the most impressive thing is that such scholarship comes with such warmth and care from students. My correspondence box contains so many kind words from Year 13 leavers – thoughtful words of appreciation and gratitude. One of the finest highlights of my academic year was teaching Year 13: what joy they brought. The term and school year draws to a close with so much to admire in so many of my colleagues and students. The prospect of a break is enticing partly because it offers that opportunity to stand back and reflect: to plan all the better for next year. A few weeks to dream; a few weeks for our school community to collect memories of the very best of themselves, be proud and to store away some lessons about the parts that went less swimmingly well. I hope that this school community is closing its year with some of its dreams intact, a sense of contentment and self-knowledge. In a year that brought the most outstandingly outstanding Ofsted report we can certainly bask in glory a little but we are only as good as today! I go to my brief respite feeling as privileged as ever and excited about the prospect of another year to come. What can I make afresh? What lessons did I learn? How can yet more students catch the excitement of endeavour?



## EXQUISITE MUSIC



A melange of talent and an assortment of genres and styles: this year's Katharine Kent Concert was a showcase of some of the musical highlights of the year. Supported by the eponymous patron herself, governors, teaching staff, the restaurateur and friend of the school Sally Clarke, this was an esteemed audience. The school choir presented its lightest repertoire on record, with sumptuous madrigals from John Dowland and Orlando Gibbons, to treats from Edward Elgar and the American folk song, Shanandoah. The orchestra gave their most accomplished performance of recent years, with a playful rendition of Bond themes, creatively arranged for our particular configuration of talent. The piano performances from Yasmin Al-Nabahani (Einaudi), Lucia Shakespeare (Beethoven) and Anton Cornibert (Jazz Standards) punctuated a number of exciting

ensembles and solos. The undisputed show-stopping number of the evening, however, was clear to all: Yola Khodja's Feeling Good (supported by Ms Amy Chapman, Mr Thomas Cattermole and Nikita Wyatt). Her control, tone and musicality are highly impressive and enviable and there was certainly something of the Beyoncé about her improvisational flair – she is an example of exceptional talent worth following!

## THE HEAD AND SHAKESPEARE

Congratulations to Colin Hall who has been successful in being offered the position of trustee on the board of the Shakespeare Schools Festival. Much encouraged by governor Michael Tory and by our ever positive Chair of Governors. Colin will doubtless fit it all in. The Shakespeare Schools Festival is the UK's largest youth drama festival and is based on the premise that performing Shakespeare on a professional stage in front of a paying audience gives students a wonderful opportunity to unleash their creativity and gain confidence in new ways. There has never been a more exciting time to be part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival and Colin's knowledge of Shakespeare and proven track record of innovative school productions of the bard's work will undoubtedly benefit the festival and allow the school to benefit from this very worthy educational enterprise. The stakes will be doubtless even higher for the Leadership Team's 2016 Shakespeare performance.

## A SOPHISTICATED END

Amidst the glitz and glamour of the Millennium Hotel on Gloucester Road, in excess of two hundred excited Year 11 students and members of staff enjoyed an evening of lively conversation, happy reminiscences, fine food and music to celebrate the end of their GCSE studies. The event was made resplendent by our beautifully attired students with graceful dresses balanced by a collection of flamboyant dinner suits worn by the boys. The students exuded charm,

impeccable manners and joy as they revelled in being together as a year group for the final time. The evening offered students a moment for reflection on successes enjoyed on their journey through Holland Park School and it was with great pride that the Leadership Team and teachers celebrated a quite splendid collection of young people. We wish them every success with results this coming summer.

MR ROSS WILSON, DEPUTY HEAD

## ‘..some of us are looking at the stars’



It has been another stellar year for Sixth Form students, not least because of some exceptional opportunities afforded them. The sixth form debating society was privileged this term to welcome John Bercow, Speaker of The House of Commons and MP for Buckingham. Mr Bercow presented a fascinating insight into his high profile and most significant work as Speaker, then chaired a vigorous debate on the subject of assisted dying, providing invaluable feedback to speakers afterwards. We are enormously grateful for his generosity of time and for allowing us to benefit from his sharp intellect and experiences, warmth and good humour. Not content merely with further reading, attending public lectures, giving up evenings and weekends at university master-classes, a clutch of our students have taken their preparation a whole stage further by entering into national essay competitions held by the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and the London School of Economics. Violet Smart travelled to Keble College to receive her honourable mention for her essay on the value of prayer. Omar Sabbagh's success as a runner up in a philosophy essay on the significance of suffering in moral decision making has now been matched by year 12 students whose essays that have been highly commended: Tom Harris (on the rationality of the electorate) and George Crafer (on globalisation and economics). We watch with bated breath for the outcome of the most recently submitted essay by Griffin Tory on the gap between rich and poor and economic growth: given its range of research and

balance of judgement, we await the result with some optimism and excitement! This term's Sixth Form highlights would not be complete without mentioning Anton Cornibert's success in being named the National Cadet of the Year for St John's Ambulance. He is the first cadet to win the title in eight years and the first ever from the Westminster unit. Brimming with unassuming modesty, his victory is by no means born of ostentatious self-confidence but rather of absolute commitment, reliability and talent. His feat comes as he prepares read Paramedic Science at St George's in September – for the which he is eminently well-suited. And finally, our annual tearful valediction culminated in the wondrous and poignant event that is the Sixth Form dinner on Friday 26th June. The dress code (dashing and radiant) may have the appearance of flexibility, but its essence is clear to all: it is an evening of elegance that celebrates some of the wonderful achievements that the class of 2015 has enjoyed: three Oxbridge places, a tranche of offers from Russell Group Universities, courses in Law, English, History, Philosophy, Chemistry – and countless others. Colin Hall's address to students elaborated on the theme of privilege: though no doubt many students would look back on their time at Holland Park with fondness and gratitude, it was his privilege to work with such a calibre of committed students that he chose to extol. Our students were, as ever, impeccably turned out and stunning examples of demure maturity.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON, DEPUTY HEAD

# THE SUMMER EXHIBITION



Ercol-Pinch inspired furniture and a hanging of pictures reminiscent of the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition were but two features of our own GCSE art and product design students whose exhibits – daringly executed – were matched by those completed by A Level design students. A Level design students began their careers with the exceptional Mr Hugo Busbridge who inspired them to choose design. Were he still with us he would be so delighted. It was a particular pleasure to see so many parents at the exhibition and hear their commentary on the work. Traditional joints in beautiful wood were combined with innovative technology, all part of our superb resources and state of the art technology. The finesse of some pieces was exceptional and the rendering of paint matched by some exquisite wood. Practical creativity is alive and kicking. The exhibition was housed in our fourth floor gallery, soon to be a September home for a new exhibition to start the 2015/2016 academic year.

MR GREG SMITH  
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

# A PRIVATE VIEW

The great and the good joined the school's nearest and dearest in the final 12 hours before the art examiner's arrival. Katherine Kent beamed with delight; Sally Clarke, whose eye is as keen on art as it is in food, observed open-eyed. Our Private View of A-Level artwork exhibited a collection of visually stunning, and conceptually profound pieces in our scrubbed-up period building, Thorpe Lodge. Colin Hall and Paul Eakins spent ten hours on their hands and knees hand waxing the 1905 floors. Beautiful though they were, some mention should be given to the art! Exceptional work was the hallmark from Mr Chappell's AS art class. Such rare talent from students was in abundance, some of whom began their A-Level at the age of 14! In addition to technical brilliance and aesthetic flair, so much of the work stirs the inner recesses of the soul. Sophia Ellis' exploration of the relationship between model and artist was a piercingly sharp and deliciously subtle feminist critique of traditional imagery. Rose Norris' non-representational studies featured insightful

commentary on the role of intuition in beauty. Sarah Bagheri's sensational rendering of light and tone, poise and humility exposed what is so shallow about our common quest for meaning and enlightenment. Chater Jordan's poignant reflection on identity and upbringing was a revelatory exegesis of what it means to be trapped between cultures. Iris Cousins' exquisite self-portraits powerfully demonstrated all that is fragile and fragmented in our sense of self-worth. Hena Pasic's bold forms took the viewer through a study of the importance and complexity of social interaction, identity and language. Phoebe Ingleby's portrayals of self were immense in scale, quality and conceit: a spectacular inquiry into stature and significance. Brylle Perez's 'still lifes' winked at the ghosts of seventeenth century Dutch masters. That which was produced by students has stunned and inspired in equal measure. It is a show whose artwork is worthy of any degree show and a compelling example to all students across the school of the art of the possible.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON  
DEPUTY HEAD



# PERFECT TENSE

On a sun-dappled evening they arrived: the men black-tied, dinner-suited and the women with eloquent dresses – they, being our much celebrated recipients of the school's awards and their guests. In a lavender and rosemary scented hall beautiful words were said and sublime music was sung. Nicholas Robson's choir moving us with Fauré's 'In Paradisum' and his own arrangement of 'Jar of Hearts'. Jola Khodja sang solo with great verve and joy. There were gifts and named awards: antique silver spoons, a commissioned porcelain jug or mug for special winners. The Melinda Libby Cup went to Violet Smart for seven exceptional years of academe, care, sensitivity and social responsibility. The brothers McLeod: Jonah and Sidney, carried off the Sally Clarke award and the Elizabeth Rutherford Cup respectively for their astonishing maturity and contribution to choir and to school life. Katharine Kent embraced the winner of the award in her name (Rosie Lloyd Reed) with such beautiful warmth and sincerity. Celia Birtwell gave her award to the talented artist Sarah Bagheri. Simon Griffiths bestowed his award on the charming Matt Parker, Sion Elias his, on Oxbridge hopeful, Tom Harris. June Harris (no relation) gave hers to the ever delightful Josie Dixey Watson. Colin Hall amused his audience, celebrated his students but in typical style also touched us deeply. In creating, for example, a new award – the Anne Hobson award – a friend of the school and topic of assembly earlier this year, he allowed us to comprehend that moments of sadness can be translated into moments of celebration of the best in people. She gave her award to the sensitive George Crafer and Christopher Buckmaster gave his to another Oxford hopeful Griffin Tory. A joy of the evening was the appearance of Miss Brigid Jennings giving her award at the end of her first year of retirement. She was radiant and a reminder of the glowing past that she had here for over a quarter of a century. And, we were delighted to have Bel Powley now an international renowned actress give an award in her name to the gloriously smiling Kai Chappell. Soon to be parents of this school John and Sally Bercow, James and Katya Orrell watched the evening with pleasure. So, as the sun went down, we relished in the glow of an evening which represented the best of young people and school life.



## DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Duke of Edinburgh Award has continued to grow in prominence this year and over 150 students are completing either the bronze, silver or gold awards. The summer term has seen these students packing their rucksacks with supplies and heading off into the wilderness to complete the expedition part of their awards. Students have been challenged to plan routes, navigate through difficult terrain and learn camp craft including cooking their own meals all alongside the rigours of examinations. Students have enjoyed the challenges that they have encountered but they have also volunteered their time and developed other skills to secure their awards and their relentless enthusiasm has ensured their success.

## DID CONSTABLE HAVE A GCSE IN MATHEMATICS?

No, he did not, but the stunning Flatford Mill that he painted hosted our gifted young mathematicians in late May. In the visually stunning setting, equations were solved, magical things happened with numbers and students went to sleep dreaming of trigonometry. Breakfast came with algebraic talk and the tireless Ms Harris computed the value added of the Holland Park Trust's investment in the visit.

MS FRANCES HIRST, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



## WALKING IN WALES

In truth, climbing and mountaineering: it was all highs and lows, peaks and troughs. The annual VIVO reward expedition made Ms Pilling glow with pride, surrounded as she was by those students whose positivity and contribution to school life took them to Snowdonia. Thanks to excellent guidance from trained specialists it was a blister free experience and the view from the top not one that can be had anywhere else. Beats the view from the Trellick Tower, if you want to see green!

## SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

During a hot summer's afternoon in June some of the schools' most talented sportsmen and women gathered together for the annual PE awards event. Taking place in the beautiful Reading Garden with an expertly cooked BBQ the awards saw approximately 70 students vying for one of the prestigious accolades. Babak Ibbetson regaled us with tales of his emphatic win at the Hyde Park Charity Run; just one memorable highlight of the event. Special recognition was given to the various team successes during the year and our most worthy winners of the Sportsman and Sportswoman of the year award.

MR TOM MITCHELL, LEADER OF BOYS' PE



## GLORIOUS FOOD

Herbs tasting of camembert, vegetables tasting like pizza and a race to create a the best smoothie on an exercise bike were some of the highlights of our Year 7 Food Day. Marcio, our congenial head chef, was seen pedalling furiously alongside students whilst extolling the virtues of a healthy diet, particularly in relation to learning. The event excited, energised and educated students about new and healthy foods, some never seen or tasted before, and provided an important focus on the links between healthy eating and its positive impact on learning.

MR RICHARD NORTHOVER, DEPUTY HEAD



## CHARITY RUN

It was an splendid sight to see 118 students dressed top-to-toe in house colours – and two dressed as a banana – marching down Campden Hill Road towards Hyde Park on Thursday 7th May. Tensions were high on the start line as runners jostled for position alongside the eight or so members of staff who had very kindly joined us. Sponsorship money is still being received, but currently stands at £1342 raised for the Royal Marsden Hospital.

## A MINUTE TO VALUE

The whole school assembled in the atrium at 12 noon to observe respectful silence for the atrocity in Tunisia. Sadly, this was not dissimilar to our gathering ten years ago after the July bombings. Students' impeccable demeanour and applause a reminder of our utter commitment to secularism, rejection of all forms of extremism and a testament to students' maturity and compassion.

## THANKS

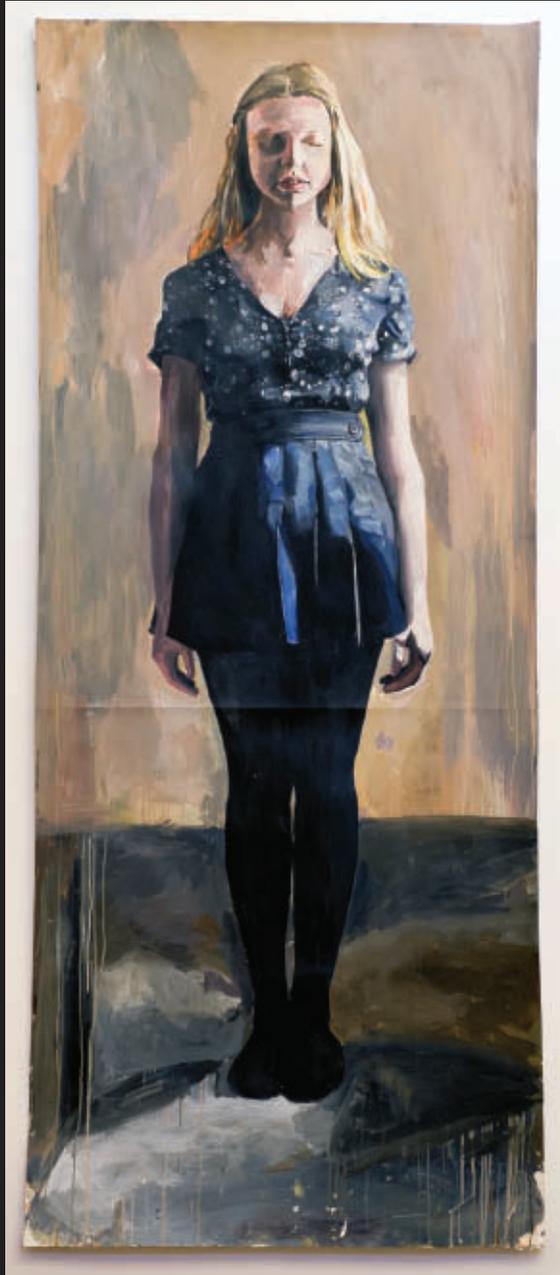
As the year closes our thanks go to our splendid governors: to Anne Marie Carrie, Chair; to Cllr. Mrs Elizabeth Rutherford JP, Vice Chair; to Gilly Wiscarson JP, Chair of Resources and Audit; to Michael Tory, Chair of Performance; and to all other governors for their support and encouragement. Thanks too, to the Holland Park School Trust for continuing to finance so many opportunities for students.



## ...AND NOT A MAN IN A BLACK SUIT

*Et Cetera* is too small to publish all staff news but after six splendid years of teaching English Ms Alexandra Pugh, has been promoted to the school's Leadership Team to lead English. Glamorous, she says that she will not be wearing black and that will doubtless be cause of great amusement to those who derive much gentle fun from seeing the Leadership Team as 'the men in black'. Joining Ms Redfearn and Ms Hirst, she will doubtless add colour. Helping her in the English team will be the formidable Ms Oxtoby, the splendidly organised Ms Harvey and the calm rigour of Ms Cole. Ms Pugh's phenomenal A level results last year are in the league of those gathered over the years by the redoubtable Miss Jennings.

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**HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL**



Phoebe Ingleby | Standing, 2015 | Acrylic on heritage paper, 300 x 110 cm