



AUTUMN 2015 ISSUE 9

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot:

Sir Antony Gormley, OBE

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

The 19th November 2015 came and went: it marked the three year anniversary of our arrival in the new building. No one said a word, but perhaps that is how it should be: we live in the present, not the past. That said, it seems to me that the past contains lessons which help us manage the present. Whilst I am far too young to remember WW2, my parents lived it and the deprivation and suffering of those war years were the backdrop of my childhood. Deprivation is the mother of industry and ambition. It is complex being a teenager in 2015 and I find myself full of admiration for the manner in which so many young people conduct themselves and balance the easy temptations of adolescence to remain focused on those things that require commitment, endeavour and practice. The evidence that many do so has lain this term in: the queues to take up the Duke of Edinburgh scheme; the dedication shown by our choir; the responses to assemblies; the six hundred or so students who take part in a rich extra-curricular life after school and the innumerable personal stories of some young people's resilience, kindness and thoughtfulness. In an educational climate that is utterly demanding, I find myself relieved that students' personal skills, manners, care and ability to communicate warmly, politely and with appreciation, is high on their agenda. It has been a busy term with visitors from many other schools across the country: to a person they have applauded and been impressed by students' thorough engagement with learning. I might add that they have also sung the praises of teachers and their approach to work. Over the years, achieving has become more and more demanding and to date our students have responded to all of that challenge. Thus, in the government's analysis of all schools' performance in the summer of 2015 we can stand proud – once again placed in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Context and history is all: such success did not merely happen by accident, it was created by a single-minded community and its results (in the broadest sense) make young lives secure for the future. If a debt is owed by this generation of the twenty first century (and it is), we must repay the debt by owning the privilege of using all we have been given, not squandering it. For those to whom much is given, much is expected. I think that the pages which follow are an indication of our students rising to the challenge.

MR COLIN HALL
HEAD

REMEMBRANCE

At the 11th hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month our school lined the atrium and marked a two minute silence to remember those who died in the service of our country and whose sacrifices in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 paved the way for the society we live in today with its national health service, its homes for rent, its free education: all built on the sacrifices made not only by those who died but by any whose efforts made our experience possible. Not only, of course, in those whose two world wars but in more recent times, those who work to protect democracy and tolerance. We were privileged to hear from Captain Charlie Winstanley, 4th Battalion The Rifles, and to have Mr Godfrey Young, a Chelsea Pensioner, join our service.

MS KATE EDDISON
TEACHER OF LANGUAGES

AND THEY CAME FROM THE NORTH

On Friday 23rd October some thirty senior school leaders from the north arrived to spend a day in the life of our school. And we went north ourselves, dispatching Mr Hall and Mr Robson to Harrogate to spend a day at Harrogate High School to see what they could bring back as some excellent practice. Mr Robson was awestruck by the way in which the school exuded warmth and by the level of teachers' planning to help those who find learning complex. He said "By January there will be at least six practical ideas in place as a result of my day at Harrogate High, what an inspirational place." Following our Ofsted inspection it is our aim to ensure that we go on looking, searching for inspiration to keep us at the 'top of our game'. And, Mr Hall and Mr Robson confessed there was time for a cup of tea and a cake whilst waiting for the (delayed) train home.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ASSOCIATE HEAD





Messiah

It is sometimes a little difficult to read Colin Hall's boldest and most challenging ideas. Many of them are provocative, fresh and – so the rumour goes – even humorous. The suggestion that the school's choir might put on a public "come-and-sing-Handel's-Messiah" rehearsed in a day, performed in the evening, however, possessed a different magnitude of ambition. Interminable semi-quaver passages, stretching tessituras, delicious discords, exposed solos – all make this a piece of music unlike the intricate yet serenely woven melodic lines of the renaissance music that dominates the choir's repertoire. Yet this was not a challenge to be avoided; it was met with gusto and enthusiasm. The choir expanded to account for the swollen interest not just the teachers and students but also parents, governors and members of our local community. Friends of the school, Sally Clarke and Katharine Kent, bolstered the Soprano lines. Soloists from Opera Holland Park led the arias and recitatives – and all were accompanied on that great beast of organs at Our Lady of Victories, Kensington High Street with kind permission of Mgr Jim Curry and those who could not sing were to come and watch. Some of Summer 2015's Year 13 came back from a first term at university. We were delighted to have long-time friend of the school Mary Ludlow make every effort to attend. Frail and wheelchair bound, her energy and passionate commitment to the school – undimmed. June Harris, friend of the school travelling 300 miles from Northumberland. The time to attend set aside by caring teachers keen to acknowledge everyone's effort and be part of an important part of the life of the school. Of course, the Hallelujah chorus was a triumph. Handel's gift is to write for vocalists as though they are

blasting brass and the singers took on this expectation admirably. If the tenors and basses solidified the harmonic foundations as horns, the sopranos and altos sprinkled animation and sparkling levity as cornets. Notable in particular was the sensitivity and confidence with which Jonah and Sidney McLeod led the tenor section during those iterations, "King of kings!" – what an exciting prospect they both are in the choral world! And if Hallelujah was a triumph, He Trusted in God was its powerful polyphonic counterpart. The choir rose commendably to the fugue's virtuosic demand. Mr Cattermole and Mr Ball, leading the bass parts, opened in style with an earthy and expressive first subject and the upper voices joining later lent an arousing touch of the celestial. It remains a pleasure to lead this choir though on this occasion I was just as delighted to share some of the conducting with my twin brother, Dr Timothy Robson, and be able to sing. The evening's performance marked a triumph for a choir that was once so shy that they sang from behind a screen. No more. The term culminated with their performance in our traditional close of term's 'Something Spiritual'. Their haunting notes allowing the school community an opportunity for quiet contemplation and reflection. After the excitement and energy of the Handel, it was the perfect antidote to sing music much more inward looking and thoughtful. Peter Cornelius' 'The Three Kings' was wonderfully led by Jonah - his first public solo with the choir, delivered with all the sonorous and resonant sensitivity that one could wish for. It was a fitting end for an intensive term for music making at Holland Park.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
DEPUTY HEAD

CONNECT

During half term we watched with excitement as a sculpture, by the internationally renowned artist Antony Gormley, was lifted from the ground to be sited on the south west corner of the school's roof. Gormley is widely acclaimed for his sculptures, installations and public artworks, each of which investigate the relationship of the human body to space. His work has been exhibited throughout the UK and internationally. He is the creator of the *Angel of the North*, *Field for the British Isles*, and *Quantum Cloud*. In 1994 he was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize. A planning condition for our new building was the procurement of a piece of public art. In 2011, as a long time admirer of Antony Gormley's work, I approached his studio,

more out of sheer nerve, than any expectation that he might agree to produce a piece of work for the school on a very modest budget. One very long phone call later and a visit to the new building in its early stage of construction, he agreed. Work on the design and construction of *Connect* began in 2014 and reached completion some weeks before it was delivered to school on a lorry and hoisted by crane up to roof level. Constructed from corten steel, its patina over time will change from grey to a deep orange brown. The work belongs to the land that the school currently occupies and will remain on this site indefinitely; even if, in the distant future, the school no longer exists.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ASSOCIATE HEAD

ABEL MAGWITCH

Mr Northover was in his element as Magwitch in one of an array of the English team's dramatic endeavours this term. Perhaps he was desperate to recreate his Oscar winning rendition of the villainous Mr Bumble in our earlier introduction to Dickens' 'Oliver Twist.' I think we can expect to see much more of Mr Northover on our Holland Park stage this year. It was with great amusement that the parent with whom he was meeting shortly after the event ended pointed out that he still boasted his painted moustache! Hosted in a cold, gloomy, spider-ridden Thorpe Lodge, Mr Northover enacted a scene from Great Expectations, leading Mr Robson to say, not for the first time, that his colleague merits a bigger part in our Leadership Team Shakespeare. (Don't tell Mr Seed!) Year 7 students shrieked in real fear as, from the gloom of the marshes, leaped a frightened Pip pursued by Mr Northover who snarled ferociously his request for 'wittels and brandy.' Moving on quickly students were ushered into Miss Havisham's boudoir where they were introduced to the jilted spinster who related melancholically her sad past. Gasps were heard as she admitted she had 'not seen the light of the sun since before they had been born' and unsurprisingly there were no takers when she offered them some wedding cake that had lain untouched on the banquet table for over twenty years! A well placed rat sent the students scurrying into the next room where they joined Fagin's den arriving just as Oliver Twist entered with the artful Dodger played by Ms Milgate. Ms Harvey may have excelled as the buxom Nancy earlier on in the term but she proved equally compelling as the haughty Estella as she danced with the enthralled grown up Pip played by Mr Holloway who looked genuinely distraught when she cruelly spurned him. Groans filled the air as the students were told that if they wanted to know how

these tales ended they had to read them...

The English team have certainly been busy this term. George Offenbach and Edisher Kipiani were seriously impressive as they battled it out in a bid to become Holland Park's 'Poetry by Heart' champion and Ms Nightingale proved victorious in her successful bid to be crowned the winner of this year's Poetry Factor. The judges 'liked her last year' but they 'LOVED her this year' and it was three yeses for her!

MS ALEXANDRA PUGH
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



FOUNDERS FOR SCHOOLS

The founder of Café Nero, the founder of SKYPE, the founder of... Courtesy of introduction by a parent, students were privileged to host a number of successful entrepreneurs who have carved out extremely lucrative and exciting business careers. Students listened early as they understood how chance, industry, even sometimes failure, led our uber A list business people to success. The programme of visitors was organised by Mr Northover who said 'My jaw dropped when I realised the magnitude of the people to whom our students were listening'. What a profound experience to have first-hand evidence of the world beyond school.

MS LE POIDEVIN
LEADER OF PSHCE AND CAREERS

THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE WORM

The university offers have flooded in and as I write this some eight hopefuls are preparing for their interviews at Oxford and Cambridge, having been successful in their entrance tests. There are a number of students already sitting on a full set of offers and such students can now focus on the real business in hand of working to obtain the grades. We have news of some of last year's students. Omar writes to Mr Hall from Cambridge

Dear Mr Hall,

First, I owe you an apology - this is not quite the promised 2-weeks-in email. Forgive me. But (yes...I've just done that horrible thing where I start a sentence with 'But') I am pleased to tell you that I absolutely LOVE Cambridge, and am having an amazing time here. I adore the people and the atmosphere at my (King's) college; it's so casual, relaxed, friendly and welcoming - not to mention the fact that it's beautiful and helpfully located right in the city centre. Further, the social life is amazing with an endless list of activities to get involved in (I've chosen to take up some archery!). Further, we are presented with so

many privileges! Just a few weeks ago I went to listen to a speech given by the Philosopher A.C. Grayling, and before yesterday to listen to a debate between 4 fellows of law (2 of which were from other universities [Oxford and KCL]) - and this is despite the fact that I've been sparing in my visits to such events! As for the work, I can now personally confirm that those who claim that study at Cambridge is intense, speak truth!! To be honest, I've been struggling trying to catch up on all the work for my supervisions, whilst staying on track with lectures. This is probably made more difficult by the fact that I was an absolutely pampered kid in London, so getting used to living alone is quite a big step - who would have known I consume such great quantities of milk on a daily basis?!?! And yet, despite the difficulty I am enjoying my studies very much. Words (or, at least, my sloppy use of words) cannot express just how lucky we are to have the very academics who write the books we study lecture and supervise us! Further, I am finding the study of the law itself fascinating, and no difficulty can diminish my passion for it (he says, after a mere 5 weeks of study...). I recently bumped into Matilda and Cristina on two separate occasions, both of whom made my day!! They seem to be doing really well. Again, forgive my tardiness in fulfilling my promise. I hope you have enjoyed an amazing first half-term, though I'm sure the absence of your favourite English students has led to some heartfelt tears...

Thank you again, for everything - I couldn't have reached this without the invaluable help of Holland Park School and its amazing staff. Please let me know if there's anything I can do in support of the school.

All the best,
Omar

It is a great pleasure and privilege to hear from students as they go out into the university world to make their mark on academia.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
DEPUTY HEAD



MONOPOLY

An excited cast performed to a full house for two nights in this year's school production which was created by Mr Simon Dobson. Never before has a board game been so reinvented. A cast of two hundred spanning the full diversity of the school, danced, acted and sang with great enthusiasm. George Offenbach and Jonah McLeod played leading parts but there were signs of

successors to their talent in the lower years. That was our student performance: next up our annual staff Shakespeare in February. What that will be, is a deeply guarded secret, Mr Hall's Boxing Day work and our January penance - learning our lines.

MR DANIEL SEED
DEPUTY HEAD

Designed and produced by
HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL



Rose Norris | *Painting One*, 2015 | Acrylic on canvas 30 x 20 cm