

THE STANDARD

The John Lyon School Newsletter

SUMMER 2009



FORWARD WITH THE HARROW FOUNDATION

As I prepare to begin my final term at The John Lyon School, it is heartening to see the School in such a strong position.

Despite the current economic crisis, JLS is full for September 2009. We also now have a very strong and established staff who contribute enormously to our excellent reputation for pastoral care and academic performance.

I was very encouraged to see JLS reaching an impressive 80th place in the Financial Times' authoritative *Top 1000 Schools* listing recently. This represents a jump of 117 places over our position last year. The FT table is different from some other newspaper listings in that it is based purely on A Level performance and focuses solely on core subjects, excluding courses such as Media Studies. (For the sake of consistency, I should add that it has always been my view that league tables are only crude measures of a school's performance: parents should never base their choice of school on league table rankings alone.)

One of the key reasons for our strength is that JLS is part of the Harrow Foundation. We derive innumerable benefits from this, including our access to Harrow School's Ryan Theatre, its sports facilities and the Speech Room, to name but three.

Furthermore, the Harrow Foundation is a forward-looking organisation which

continues to develop. With support from the Foundation, our long-term Estates Strategy is now entering a new phase following the opening of our Science Building in the autumn. One increasing area of interdependence between the Foundation schools with which parents may not be so familiar is in IT: there is a strategy for IT that includes not only JLS and Harrow School but also the international schools.

New international schools are being planned within the Foundation. I am looking forward to taking up my new post as Headmaster of Harrow International School Bangkok in September this year and to developing in Thailand some of the elements that have been so successful at JLS in recent years, such as Sport and Drama. I hope that the Bangkok school will thus in time become an exemplar for the other international schools in the Foundation.

By Kevin Riley, Headmaster



Oklahoma! *The John Lyon School's colourful musical was a great success. See p4-5*



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JAMES CORCUT (ST MARTIN'S SCHOOL)

James is Deputy Head of School. He joined JLS when he was 13 and was awarded an academic scholarship.

I think staying at prep until I was 13 was helpful. By the time I came to choose my next school I already knew something about JLS through sports connections and friends. I was very decided about JLS – I liked the ethos. There were five of us who joined in my set at 13 and it went smoothly; we just slotted in.



I think one of the School's key strengths is that it offers so many diverse opportunities. Since I've been here I've been involved in Music, Drama and Sport. I've been encouraged to try things that I probably wouldn't have even looked at in a different environment, but without losing focus on the academic side. The quality of teaching here is excellent. I would have to pick out Mr Parsons, who has definitely been influential.

I'm one of two Deputy Heads of School. My focus has been on building social links with our sister school, Northwood College. So far we've had a James Bond night, which was great fun, and we organised an ice-skating trip.

I'm taking English Literature, History and French A Levels and I've been offered a place at Downing College, Cambridge. I'm not sure what I want to do after that – it seems a long way off at the moment – but I'm tending towards journalism.

TOM BARKER (DAWLISH JUNIOR SCHOOL)

Twelve-year-old Tom is in Year 7 and has recently been appearing alongside Sir Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart and Simon Callow in the acclaimed production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

I looked at a couple of schools last year and saw that JLS gave good Drama opportunities and had good Sports facilities. The School was just 'so there'! Everyone's been really supportive since I got this latest part; they emailed me homework when I was appearing in Malvern and allow me time off now the production's moved to London.

I take the part of a boy who brings messages to Vladimir and Estragon from *Godot*. It's been an amazing experience. I admire Sir Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart so much; they'll talk to everyone and I've learnt so much from just watching them. In particular I've learnt that you've got to be aware of the context and react to how the others say their lines to you. I've been in other productions too, I was Michael in *Mary Poppins* for five months and was also in *The Golden Compass* and Peter Davison's *Complete Guide to Parenting*.



It's difficult to fit it all in; I like to play sport when I can, and the School has been excellent. I'd have to mention Ms Syed in particular.

OUT OF CHARACTER

Year 9 pupil Kishan Sheth has had a busy filming schedule recently. He was cast as a playground bully in Laila Khan's psychological drama, *Before I Was Me*, which it's hoped will be shown at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. "I was extremely excited at the prospects of being a part of the shoot and gave it my best, despite the harsh weather conditions we suffered while shooting the playground scenes," said Kishan.

Kishan, who appeared in an Asian prime time television series called *Aisa desh Hein mera*, has also successfully auditioned for a Bollywood film called *Aisa desh Hein mera Veer* scheduled to be filmed soon.

JLS celebrated this year's bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species* with a special Darwin Week.

Teachers from subjects across the curriculum devised innovative Darwin-themed lessons, while there were also special assemblies, competitions and displays around the School.

The Science Faculty took the lead in organising the biggest cross-curricular event at JLS for some years, which combined fun with the serious aim of stimulating learning among the boys.



Head of Biology Louise Clayton explained Darwin's importance: "Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection forms the basis of modern Biology. Botany, zoology, genetics and behaviour all have a basis in his work, and he fuelled arguments that still go on to this day."

"I was delighted with the response from other departments, which embraced Darwin Week as an opportunity to stimulate teaching and learning. In RSP and PSICHE lessons, for example, the secular nature of Darwin's theory inspired some impassioned debate, which encouraged the boys to find out more for themselves about the ethical, political and religious issues involved."



Such cross-curricular approaches to learning correspond to the latest thinking on personalised learning from the National Council for School Leadership, she added.

Science lessons during Darwin Week included the dissection of locusts by Year 12 students. "Students showed maturity, precision and skill and were amazed by the intricate physiology of the locust, its life cycle and role within ecosystems," said JLS Head of Science Saaj Rana. "Discussing abstract scientific concepts as they relate to such real-life situations gave students the chance to discover the same interests and pleasures that Darwin - a keen entomologist - would have experienced himself."

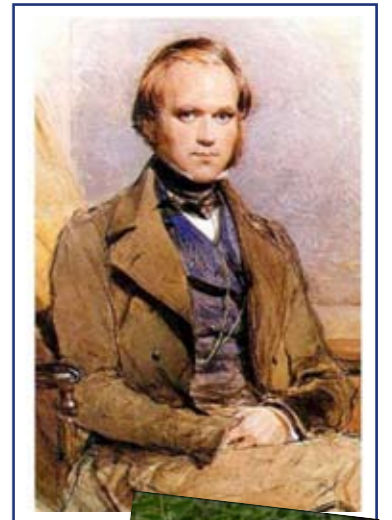


Here is just a selection of other events, lessons and activities during the week:

- Year 7 studies of birds in Art inspired by Darwin's famous finches
- A competition in identifying plants and animals for Years 7-9
- Specially themed menus in White's including 'iguana shepherds' pie'!
- Discussion of the adaptation of bodies in Games lessons
- Looking at the implications of the 'survival of the fittest' in English – should Dracula survive, for example, and what about William Golding's chilling novel about children left to their own devices, *Lord of the Flies*?
- Cartoon strips of the *Adventures of Young Darwin* handed out to boys each day in registration
- A Drama exercise focusing on the family memory box put together for Darwin's daughter, Annie, who died young.

Competition winners during Darwin Week were: Nicholas Dimpsey, Year 9, (Key Stage 3 photography competition); Krisant Valentine, Year 11, (Key Stage 4 quiz) and William Wilson, Year 13 (Key Stage 5 crossword).

The week after Darwin Week, boys from Years 10-12 visited the Natural History Museum. A number of young scientists from JLS will also be attending Cambridge University's Darwin Day during the Summer Term.



Oklahoma!

EVERYTHING'S GOIN' THEIR WAY IN SCHOOL'S BIGGEST MUSICAL

The Easter production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's much-loved *Oklahoma!* featured the biggest cast ever assembled for a JLS musical.

The light-hearted romance set in 1906 was the seventh musical produced by the Director of Drama, Deborah Gibbs. "I was really drawn to *Oklahoma!* because it has a good 'book' - quite a meaty story and not just an unconvincing way to link the songs," said Miss Gibbs. "Another attraction was the 15-minute 'ballet' - a dance telling a story - at the end of Act 1. Most companies cut some or all of that sequence, but we haven't, and the cast loved it. I managed to use really strong dancers in strong dance roles and we had really high-quality ensemble singing."

"The cast of 46 - 23 boys and 23 girls - was the largest I have ever had here, but also the easiest to work with." The production was held in Harrow School's professionally equipped Ryan Theatre and seen by an audience of around 1,000 people over three nights. These included a special Gala Night, to which the School invited guests including leavers from recent years who took part in Miss Gibbs' shows, as well as Vice Presidents of the Old Lyonian Association. The reception for the guests was held in the Old Harrovian Room.



P1 photo and all images on p4-5 by Graham Ryder unless otherwise stated

The cast were supported by 20 crew and some 15 front-of-house volunteers. Professional musicians were recruited by the School's Joint Head of Expressive Arts, Jo Rowley Jones.

Auditions took in November and there were rehearsals throughout the spring, including five days at the theatre during the half-term holiday. "I get everything 'blocked' and choreographed by then, so that in the second half of the term we are adding 'polish', not trying to learn new things," said Miss Gibbs.



Photo of Gala Night reception by Jamie Parnham, Year 13

She praised Upper Sixth-Former Harry Thatcher, who played the main romantic lead, cowboy Curly ("a perfect voice for it") and Kwasi Yeboah, who played Will, the other male lead. Miss Gibbs also singled out an "amazing" performance by Chasdip Phull, who played Ali Hakim. The female actors came from The John Lyon School's partner school, Northwood College, as well as the Royal Masonic School at Heathfield, Stanmore College and St Helen's. Lead girl Emma Cox, played Laurey, while Issy Tranter was Ado Annie.

HITTING THE HIGH NOTES WITH TOP-FLIGHT BRASS BAND

The John Lyon School Motet Choir performed with the world-famous Black Dyke Band at a specially arranged choral concert in Harrow. It gave parents, supporters of the School and members of the public a rare opportunity to hear top-quality brass band music in Middlesex.

The concert was organised by the School's Director of Music Anna Wilby, who herself played percussion with the band when she lived in Yorkshire. She was one of the two first women to perform in concert with the band, continuing a strong family link. Her father Philip Wilby, a professional composer, has



written some of the band's best-known pieces, including *Dove Descending* and *Northern Lights*. "We felt it was a tremendous privilege to have them come and perform with our choir," said Miss Wilby. "The hardest part was finding a date when they were free."

Miss Wilby invited choirs from two other London schools to take part - the Trinity Boys' Choir in Croydon and the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial Girls' Choir.

There are currently 35 boys in the JLS Motet Choir and its popularity is growing. The concert took place in Harrow School's historic Speech Room. The choir performed some exciting choral music with the band, centred around a suite from Philip Wilby's *A Passion for our Times*.



MEET A TEACHER: MR LYNDON BUDD

Mr Lyndon Budd joined JLS in 1990 as an English teacher. He still teaches English, both at GCSE and A Level, but has recently also taken on the role of co-ordinating learning support for the School.

"The trouble with a lot of the terminology involving learning support, like 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) or 'Specific Learning Difficulties' (SpLD), is that for many people it has negative connotations," says Mr Budd. "Dyslexia is not a discriminator



or decider of intelligence, and some of the help I offer at The John Lyon School is with boys who can also be in the Gifted & Talented cohort."

Statistics show that approximately 10% of the population are, to some degree, dyslexic, and an increasing number of males in particular can be placed on the autistic spectrum, with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome becoming more commonly identified. Without appropriate support, such learning conditions can hold back even the brightest of pupils. "Many children with SpLDs are picked up at primary school," says Mr Budd "but the brightest ones will often have found their own coping mechanisms and can slip through the net. One part of my role is to try to ensure that no boy who needs learning support goes without. It's a task made easier by the ethos of the School, which is to treat each boy as an individual."

If a boy applies to the School with an acknowledged SpLD he is given extra time in the entrance examination to give him an opportunity to demonstrate what he can do. All boys entering JLS are now routinely screened for dyslexia the School can then see if formerly undiagnosed difficulties need following up.

"Some boys need one-to-one help with spelling

or reading strategies; some benefit from working in small groups, while others may need more time in examinations. Some boys, both younger and older, simply need encouragement and confidence boosting." says Mr Budd.

The School is committed to giving all the boys equal opportunities to succeed. Assisting Mr Budd in his work in learning support is Felicity Brown. Originally from the Drama Department, Mrs Brown is now retraining as a dyslexia specialist. Also, each year, a member of the Sixth Form is invited to return for his gap year to work at the School as a Learning Support Assistant. "We find it works better having someone who knows the School from the inside, rather than someone who will not automatically be familiar with the setting and staff," explains Mr Budd. "Abhiram Sahathevan, a gap year medical student, has been a great asset for us this year."

Mr Budd is originally from Abertillery in South Wales. He has a BA in English and History from Cardiff University, a Post Graduate Certificate of Education from Aberystwyth University, a Master's degree in English from Swansea University, and more recently gained a Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties and Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association.

He is married to Andrea who currently works in Gayton Library. He has one daughter, Charlotte, who is 14, and an 11-year-old son, Alexander, who will be joining The John Lyon School in September. His interests include photography – he takes many of the images for the School publications and website. He also enjoys swimming and cycling and is an active member of Rayner's Lane Baptist Church, helping out in the Sunday School and the annual holiday club.

ARCHITECTURAL CLUB

A tour of buildings of architectural interest was organised for pupils who are part of the Gifted & Talented cohort. The group, who are all members of the JLS Architectural Club, visited St Paul's and the controversial Paternoster Square Development.

The pupils went down to the river's edge to pick up the cattle bones, clay pipes and roman tiles washed up by the Thames. After crossing the Millennium Bridge, designed by Arup, Foster and Partners and Sir Anthony Caro, the boys moved on to Tate Modern – housed in the former Bankside Power Station, originally designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and converted by the architects Herzog & de Meuron.

After lunch, they walked down St James's Street to St James's Palace and then along Pall Mall to Trafalgar Square, where the tour ended. The boys were tired after such a lot of walking, but decided that Pall Mall and Trafalgar Square deserve their places on the Monopoly board!

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CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS: John Hayes



Fact file

- Became Chairman of The John Lyon School Governors in September 2008.
- Attended Harrow School (1962-1966). Read Law at Cambridge.
- Qualified as a chartered accountant and then became a management consultant with Coopers and Lybrand, which merged with Price Waterhouse in 1998 and became PricewaterhouseCoopers. Made a Partner in 1987.
- With Coopers and Lybrand/PricewaterhouseCoopers for 27 years until its management consulting business became part of IBM in 2002. With IBM ever since.
- Has spent 15 years in financial services and 12 years in the public sector. Currently Finance Director for a large division in HM Revenue & Customs, based in the Treasury at 100 Whitehall.
- Married to Nicola for 33 years. They have four boys, aged 18-30. Lives in Buckinghamshire.
- "After the family, my passions are skiing, sailing and the outdoors generally."

The Standard: What are your aims and aspirations for JLS?

JH: One of our major objectives as Governors is to present and build on recent major successes. That is particularly in terms of academic results – including last summer's – as well as in sport and in the extension of individual support and pastoral care. I believe that all three are seen by our parents and prospective parents as an attraction of the School.

Similarly my aim will be to present and build on the achievements of the new Head, an appointment I was very pleased with since Katherine Haynes was clearly the right candidate. We have some really superb new Governors with relevant skills and experience – such as Anthony McLaren, the Chief Executive of UCAS – who are taking strategic roles. There is also the successful completion of the new Science Building. For me, each of these – the Head, the new Governors and the Science Building – is ground-breaking.

Now I would like to extend our areas of excellence. Where we want to end up ultimately is with a School that has a reputation for being absolutely the best in a specific area.

The Standard: Can you tell us about changes you've introduced to the JLS Governors?

JH: Well, as I said, we are trying to exert excellence in everything we do as a School. That starts in the way the School is governed. I have focused on getting the Governors to work as a team. I also very strongly want to bring the teachers into the same frame of mind: that we are working towards the same ends and that we know each other. We now meet socially for dinner for every JLS Governors' meeting, and a number of teachers are invited too. I want the Governors and the teachers to enjoy being there. I want it to be fun. Also, we don't overrun our meetings now.

As Governors, we are trying to strengthen the position of the School as a community – as a community of parents, boys and teachers, as a community of old boys both recent and past, and as part of the community of two schools on the Hill. I see it as part of my job to connect the School with Harrow – there is no turning back. We need to build up that

caucus of a community around all these factors.

The Standard: What else do you see as a key element in the School's development?

JH: I think that improving the availability and granting of funding for development is certainly important. We must demonstrate that the School itself is able to contribute to its own development. One of my aims is to improve the School's cost of funding by having an efficient School that does make the most of its opportunities through having good relationships with stakeholders and benefactors, who would of course include parents and Old Lyonians. It's about achieving internal excellence first and then we want to be perceived as excellent externally. Building that sense of community and joining the organisation together on the Hill will help in that. I want to have pride in JLS as we develop our relationship with Harrow and talk to them about helping us with developing The John Lyon School.

Of course, there is also the question of bursaries. John Lyon's Charity is assisting both JLS and Harrow with increased funding for bursaries. The role of The John Lyon School is critical, since the difference in fees between a day and a boarding school means it is effectively possible to fund almost three JLS bursaries for the price of a single bursary at Harrow.

The Standard: How do you see the current recession affecting the School?

JH: Our intake for September 2009 has kept up, which is obviously encouraging. We are expecting the effects of the current downturn to be felt strongly next academic year, that is for 2010-11. We are conscious that it may have an impact on our intake next year and we are working to manage that. Our feelers are out in all the right places and we are visiting schools and keeping the profile of the School up.

We are also aware that the downturn may severely impact some of the existing parents, and we will try to support those in financial difficulty as best we can. As I mentioned, we are looking at efficiency right across the School, and particularly at this time to make sure it sees us through the recession.

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HIGH FLYERS

It has been a very successful season for the School's badminton teams. Both the U14 and U16 teams won the Borough Cup, qualifying for the Regional finals. The U19 team beat Haileybury and came second to Haberdashers' in the Harrow Schools Invitation Badminton tournament. Ashish Thaker and Hamza Khan (pictured) were both selected for the Middlesex U16 squad.

JLS has a strong tradition of success at badminton, dating back more than 20 years to when archivist Bill Podmore coached the boys. Now badminton is taught as part of the curriculum to boys in Years 7 and 8 as part of *Net and Wall* games, which includes table tennis and short tennis as well as badminton. The aim is to help develop boys' hand-to-eye co-ordination. PE teacher and Head of Upper School Ian Parker also runs two out-of-school badminton clubs – for Years 7-9 and Years 10-13.



In cricket, nets are underway in all age groups as boys prepare for the first matches of the season on 25th April. The U13 squad are on a mini-tour to Hazlegrove Prep in Somerset in the Easter holidays.

And plans are well underway for a football and cricket tour to South Africa in March of next year. "With the World Cup due to take place in June, it will be a very exciting time to visit," said Mr Parker. "The timing is perfect, coming at the end of the football season and offering a wonderful pre-season tour for our cricketers." The boys will play in a variety of conditions, from first-class to dusty



patches of ground. The JLS boys are encouraged to take sports clothing and boots they no longer need, which are given away to the children there.

BEST-EVER RUN FOR JLS FOOTBALLERS

Match report by Adam Jones, PE Department

The Under 15 football team reached the semi-finals of the ISFA cup, the first JLS team ever to have achieved this feat. The away match, against Manchester Grammar School, was a tense, fast-moving and hard-fought affair. JLS took an early lead on five minutes from Antony Jeffrey, and both Kingsley Alleyne and Aaron Sutherland had excellent chances to increase the lead before half-time. It was just before the half-time whistle that Manchester equalised. The second half saw Manchester start to take control of the game. Goalkeeper Oliver Marsh made some outstanding saves to keep JLS level, but JLS were soon behind as Manchester scored two quick goals to move 3-1 up with 10 minutes to play. JLS pushed an extra player forward in search of a second goal and it worked, with Daniel Aron scoring from a corner to ensure a tense last few minutes. However, as JLS threw the proverbial kitchen sink at the opposition, Manchester broke on the counter-attack to score with possibly the last kick of the game and win the match 4-2.

NEWS IN BRIEF

LOGIC AND LOGORRHOEA

Representatives from 25 North London schools came to JLS for the prestigious Oxford Schools' Debating Competition. Judges praised the quality of debate from the teams, including the boys from JLS.

OFFICIALLY VANDALS

Four JLS staff proved you are never too old to learn when the Greensleeves Morris Men came to the School. The Headmaster, Ian Parker, Ralph Durbridge and Josh Thornton had only 50 minutes to learn a dance called the *Vandals*, which they then performed at a lunchtime show. The Morris Men invited audience members to participate in their farewell dance, *Bonny Green Garters*.

TUDOR TIMES

Year 8 boys enjoyed the opportunity to follow in the 16th-century footsteps of Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey - and those of William and Mary almost 200 years later - on a visit to Hampton Court Palace.

ESTATES STRATEGY PROGRESS

Following the successful opening of the new Science Building in the autumn, the School is now considering the options for the next stage in its Estates Strategy. Scaffolding was put up around part of the Old Building during the Spring Term as a detailed survey was conducted to help decide on its best future use.

