



# Watford Grammar School for Boys Headmaster's Newsletter

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### Contact Us

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## Update from the Headmaster

Construction of our STEM Centre is now well underway and it should be ready for us to use next year. This building project has been fully funded capital grants from central and local government have not been required to use any of our school funds for this development. We are also in the process of preparing other ambitious plans for with external sources of funding and we will provide further details next term.



through and we are precious in the site reveal

After Easter we will be joined by Mrs Wright, our new librarian, who replaces Mrs Petty – a stalwart of the school who has provided exemplary service to WBGS for 19 years. After a successful secondment at The Barclay School in Stevenage, Mr Allchorn has secured the permanent headship post, which is very well deserved indeed. We will have an opportunity next term to celebrate his success and thank him for his extraordinary service to WBGS over 36 years.

Happy Holidays to you all,

Mr Cooksey

## News from around the school



The following boys were part of the WBGS team to win a **Hans Woyda maths trophy** for the first time in 20 years. Congratulations to the team: Tyrone Muriithi U6B, William Britter U6F, Luke Ashford L6C, Jeremy Zolnai-Lucas L6C, Ethan Honey L6G, Ben Jones 11F, Justin Ho 11C, Thomas Connor 9G and Tom Wall 9B.



Year 8 students visited the **STEM IDEAS BUS** showcasing DT and STEM in action. The bus featured hands on activities such as a 3D biology lesson, coding, 3D printing and design at its most elaborate, robotics and interactive musical devices. An exciting foretaste of the possibilities for our new STEM building.

## Speakers This Term

Natasha Devon - Self Esteem

Steven Bland – Sustainability

The Middle East in Crisis – John Levy

Acting as a Career – Alex Lowe

Engineering Icons – Phil Tindall

Airbus – Ranjit Manku

Journalism – Fred Bridgland

Author Visit – Michael Grant

NHS Wellbeing Support – Rachel Brown

The National Citizenship Service



L6 Classical Civilisation students visited the British Museum where they met with Dr Susan Woodford, the author of their course textbook.

It has been another very busy term for Politics Society, where the Brexit process and Trump Presidency - alongside the recent sad events at Westminster - have dominated discussions.

Among other things, the boys particularly enjoyed hearing from and meeting old Fullerian Jonny Brighton, who is currently on a year placement at Goldman Sachs before returning to University to complete his Politics studies next year.

### Lower 6th Young Enterprise

Congratulations to the team Complications who were successful in last night's round of the Young Enterprise Company Programme. They will be going forward to the county final at the University of Herts Fielder Centre on Tuesday 25th April. They won the award for the best Marketing and Social Media. The team were: Imran Chagani L6N, Alborz Fard L6N, Alex Foley L6N, Miraan Amin L6N, Nathan Burstow L6F and Jamie Ivory L6N.

### Year 9 Go4Set

Congratulations to two teams from Year 9 who entered the Go4Set competition. One team was sponsored by Leonardo and the other by Eaton Electronics. Each team member achieved their CREST silver certificate and both projects were congratulated on the quality of their result. The team members were:

Leonardo team: Ethan Underwood 9F, Harry Soma 9F, Gopinath Jani 9B, Tom Wall 9B, Jacob Haddo 9N and Charlie Scott 9B

Eaton team: Thomas Connor 9G, Aarush Lal 9P, Tim Hire 9G, Mohit Vellore 9F, James Turvey 9G and Praveen Kathirvasan 9C.

Politics Society continues to be one of the best attended and most lively societies at Watford Boys - and with the ongoing unpredictability of U.K. and world politics we expect this to continue!

Sixth form Politics students visited the Palace of Westminster and were given tours of the Houses of Parliament, which included going into the Chamber of the House of Lords. They were lucky enough to have Q and A sessions with, not just Richard Harrington MP, who answered questions of local concern, but also Lord Finkelstein who gave deeper insights into Prime Ministerial power and the Tory party as well as one of the newest MPs, Gareth Snell, who had just won the Stoke-on-Trent Central by-election and gave his views on the Labour party and its leadership.

The students had a very enjoyable day and would like to pay tribute, in light of recent events, to the staff both inside and outside the parliament buildings who facilitated their highly useful trip to the heart of our democracy.



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## Duke of Edinburgh Award

50 Year 10 students are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award this year. Maz Adam 10T describes his experience as "going the extra mile – gaining skills, helping others, putting yourself in different situations and generally trying something new".

Four activities are completed, the first three in their spare time: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition. Max has chosen to volunteer in a care home, develop his physical expertise on the

tennis court and work on his saxophone playing for the skills aspect.

Expeditions are coming up in June starting at Bridgwater Monument in Berkhamsted, including an overnight stay at Phasels Wood camp and finishing at the school. The qualifying expedition involves two groups starting/finishing at Bell Lane and Hertford Castle. Skills demonstrated for successful completion of the expedition include first aid and emergency procedures, campcraft, equipment and hygiene, catering, navigation and route planning, observation recording and presentations, teambuilding and responsibility for the environment and countryside code.



**Sainsbury's active kids vouchers should be posted into the box in reception. Please encourage your sons to bring them in. They are a great help towards purchasing PE equipment.**

## Sport update



Another successful hockey season has come to an end with over 100 fixtures played across 18 teams with close to 200 boys representing the school. Well done to the U16s who were the Team of the Season, thanks to an impressive 12 wins from 15 games, including a visit to the East preliminary rounds.

The U15s had a very good season under the stewardship of Mr Grinham and were ably captained by Player of the Season Sahir Patel 10N. Well done also to the U14s who had a fantastic first full season of 11-a-side hockey, winning 9 of their 11 games, and to Shay Rafter 9B who was the top scorer in the School with 18 goals.

It was pleasing to see the U13s develop this season and to see the number of boys participating from this year group in A-D team fixtures. Well done to Matthew Schofield 8C for his Player of the Season award. Finally, congratulations to the 1st XI on a successful season and a highly enjoyable trip to the King Edward's School, Bath hockey festival. Well done to Captain Samir Patel U6B for his hard work this season and his deserved Player of the Season award. It is with sadness that we say goodbye to our upper 6th players, but I would like to thank them for their commitment to school hockey over the last 7 years.

Many thanks all those boys who have represented the School at hockey this term for all their hard work and commitment, and to all the Staff that have taken teams for their continued support of school hockey.

## Students Making the News

BBC News School Report took place on the 16th of March this year with a wonderful collection of articles on 'women's issues from a boy's perspective' produced by Y9 and Y10 mentored by L6. The boys really enjoyed the day and the atmosphere of our WBGS newsroom and the day was covered by the *Watford Observer*. You can read the boys' articles [here](#).

Author Michael Grant joined us on World Book Day. Years 7 and 8 enjoyed his talk and many boys received a signed book.

Upper Sixth Literature students attended a series of University style lectures on 'The Merchant's Tale' and a few boys attended the New College of Humanities talk 'Shakespeare's 37 plays?' by Trevor Nunn.

Lower sixth literature students attended a day of talks on American Literature and Adem Berbic L6F delivered a superb talk on 'The Sound and The Fury'.

Adem Berbic also won runner up in the English and Media Centre's Close Reading Competition. His entry can be read [here](#).



Robbie Curwen 10F and Peter Shaw 9B went to the First News headquarters for an interview with the BBC about triggering Article 50 next week. Both boys did themselves and the school proud with thoughtful, mature and articulate responses about Brexit, credible news sources and the terrorist attack on Westminster. The piece went on air on BBC Breakfast on Tuesday the 28th of March and is available [here](#).

We were thrilled to receive more than 600 entries for our Writing Competition on the theme 'Arrivals'. We were so impressed with the quality of entries and the level of creativity. Winners to be announced early next term.



Joseph Bailey in Year 8 won this year's local schools poetry competition. The theme was 'Watford' and Richard Harrington presented him with a prize.

## What's Coming Up

The Music Competition - Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April and entries must be returned by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April. Please encourage your son to take part. The adjudicator is Mrs. Anthea Spensley.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April, the Brass Ensemble and Senior Choir will be providing the music for Founders' Day at a changed venue this year, St. Michael's Church.

The Summer Concert is scheduled for Thursday June 29<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, so please make a note of that date in your diary.

## Music News

Old Fullarian, Richard Lewis, returned to school to give a piano recital. Dr Tasmin Little also visited to deliver an excellent string masterclass to our senior strings students.

Many congratulations to the 300 boys who took part in two brilliant Spring Concerts last week. It was a real highlight of the term and every one of the thirteen ensembles rose to the occasion to produce two spectacular evenings of musical entertainment, supported by over 500 people. Thursday's concert ended with Vivaldi's Concerto Op.3 No 11, featuring magnificent solo contributions from Anthony Lo 11T, Jerry Yang 9B and Kazu Sair U6T, accompanied by the Senior Strings and then a real show-stopper, Arturo Marquez's *Danzon No. 2*, performed brilliantly by the Senior Orchestra, a performance that received a standing ovation. It was truly magnificent and a real credit to everyone involved. A heartfelt thank you to all those students who have given up their time so far this year to be part of each of our ensembles. Many congratulations to all the members of the Senior Choir who took part in a performance of Puccini's *Tosca* with Opera Herts earlier this month. The standard of musicianship was extremely high. It was wonderful to be part of this magnificent opera and maybe inspire our students to listen to some more!



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## An Update from the Head Prefect Team

This year a new senior prefect system started which saw the introduction of several departments to focus on different aspects of school life, proving very successful.

In the **Community department** we have been able to introduce a new recycling system into the school, helping to make it a cleaner, more pleasant and more environmentally friendly place to learn and grow.

**Mentoring** has continued the success of the workshop program in addition to overseeing a new peer to peer mentoring scheme, which has looked to build younger students confidence and interpersonal skills.

The **Teaching & Learning department** has implemented a new system for recruiting lower sixth-formers to run clubs and societies in addition to creating lesson feedback surveys, holding department specific competitions and carrying out duties for heads of department.

The school council has held three meetings this year where we saw the recurring theme of canteen queues and prices come up. We arranged a meeting with Taz, the head chef, to discuss people's complaints as well as working with her to introduce a new menu for the 6<sup>th</sup> form canteen.

School culture ran a hugely successful football league which we are looking to be a long lasting tradition that is run by prefect teams every year onwards. We also helped organise the joint Fuller Festival, a tradition we are hoping to see continue in the future.

The **Welfare team** have been working with head of years to improve cohesion. Furthermore we have conducted a school-wide survey of music and sport to hear the pupil's views.

The Houses and Charities Department have been busy raising money for the school's chosen charities Great Ormond Street Hospital and Watford's Women Centre.

Overall as a prefect body we have tried to be more involved with students lower down and promote more students to take extra-curricular activities. We have learnt a lot in what has been busy year and the time has flown by and we hope that the success of the senior prefect body can continue in the years to come.

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## Friends of the School

The **next committee meeting** is on the new date of Thursday April 20th. The meeting will start at 7.15pm in room L111. The friends are always looking for new members to join the executive committee, so please do come along if you have time to support the school. Contact the Chair on [wbgf.fos@gmail.com](mailto:wbgf.fos@gmail.com) should you have any questions. The AGM reports and minutes are available [here](#).

The **school second hand uniform shop** will continue to open on Wednesdays from 3.15 to 4.30 pm and one Saturday every half term (the next opening is Saturday 23rd April from 10am to 12pm). This half term, well over £100 has been raised from school shop sales. As a result, we're in need of more stock; please consider donating any old uniform or sports kit in good condition by dropping it off at reception.

Supporting school events has helped the FOS to raise an additional £1437 for the School this term. The quiz on the 25th February was also very well attended and a good time was had by all, with a grand total of £2,366 raised. The winning team was a teachers' table, so all us parents will have to study hard before next year's quiz to ensure we beat them next time! Many thanks to the Headmaster for being quizmaster and Danielle Wright for running it again this year, and to all those who attended and helped on the night.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Julie Mouzoura who is this term's winner of the WBGs Family Draw, who has won £59.28. The Family Draw has raised £177.84 this term. Please join if you can; it's only £25 per year and details can be found [here](#).