



James Allen's Girls' School 11-18  
James Allen's Preparatory School 7-11  
James Allen's Pre-Preparatory School 4-7

# Jags

History



## Dulwich + education = 400 (Years of tradition)

In 1605 the hamlet of Dulwich – its name recorded well before the Norman Conquests – was bought by the Elizabethan actor and entrepreneur, Edward Alleyn, for £4,900. Fourteen years later, Alleyn invested his fortune establishing Alleyn's College of God's Gift, buying land for a school, a chapel and the almshouses in Dulwich.

The JAGS connection came soon after. In 1621 Alleyn's diary records that he dined with Sheriff Allen, and it was the sheriff's great-grandson James Allen who was the founder of our school in 1741. Clearly in those days the surname Alleyn or Allen was one to get you noticed!

James Allen was visionary; he founded Dulwich Reading School in the centre of the village with the aim to teach local boys reading and arithmetic, but also, unusually for the time, to take girls and teach them to read and sew. In 1845 girls and boys were separated into adjoining buildings, and the Girls' School began the transformation into the JAGS we know today. In 1886, with 141 pupils, the school moved to 22 acres of beautiful new

grounds on East Dulwich Grove. With our new beginnings came even more innovative thinking. Dr Lilian Clarke arrived in 1895 as our first science lab was built. She was a pioneer in botany teaching, setting up the Botany Gardens, complete with Natural Order Beds in 1896, which girls can still work on today. Then came a salt marsh, pebble beach, sand dune and later a wood, ponds and a cornfield. Her initiatives were the first examples of ecological habitats used in practical teaching at any school. Dr Clarke was enormously influential on science teaching nationally, and generations of JAGS girls were committed gardeners and scientists. By 1931, more than 300 pupils were involved. And when war came their knowledge proved invaluable, with wholesale vegetable growing, rabbit rearing and beekeeping on the school grounds to supplement rationing. We think such resourcefulness must be in our bones!

By the time of the move to the present site, music was already firmly embedded within the curriculum. However it soared with

Botany Gardens Old Order Beds 1904



Gustav Holst, JAGS Music Teacher



Vivian Ellis (nee Morris) OG 1958 -1963 wearing JAGS uniform of 1950s

the arrival of Gustav Holst as music teacher in 1904, introduced by his friend, Ralph Vaughan Williams. Something must have inspired him in his 16 years here. Holst's gifts to JAGS of signed copies of 'The Planets', 'Savitri' and other works with dedications to the girls show deep, mutual affection.

Perhaps we get our dynamic, all-embracing approach to education from our founder, James Allen, whose distinguished portrait bears the inscription: "Skilful as a Skaiter: a Jumper, ATHLETIC and Humane". Sport and fitness certainly have their place here, with Physical Education taught to girls as early as mid-Victorian times. In 1921, Miss Mildred Knott was appointed to the staff. An excellent hockey player and captain of the England team for 16 years, she was a genuine sporting legend. In the early 1930s we hosted a match between Australia and England on the top field and also welcomed the American team. Our teams are just relieved that today's hockey kit is so much lighter and dare we say it, a tad more fashionable!



Sports Hockey Team March 1905



Lilian Clarke



Miss M Knott signing autographs (1929) with JAGS girls

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